

# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

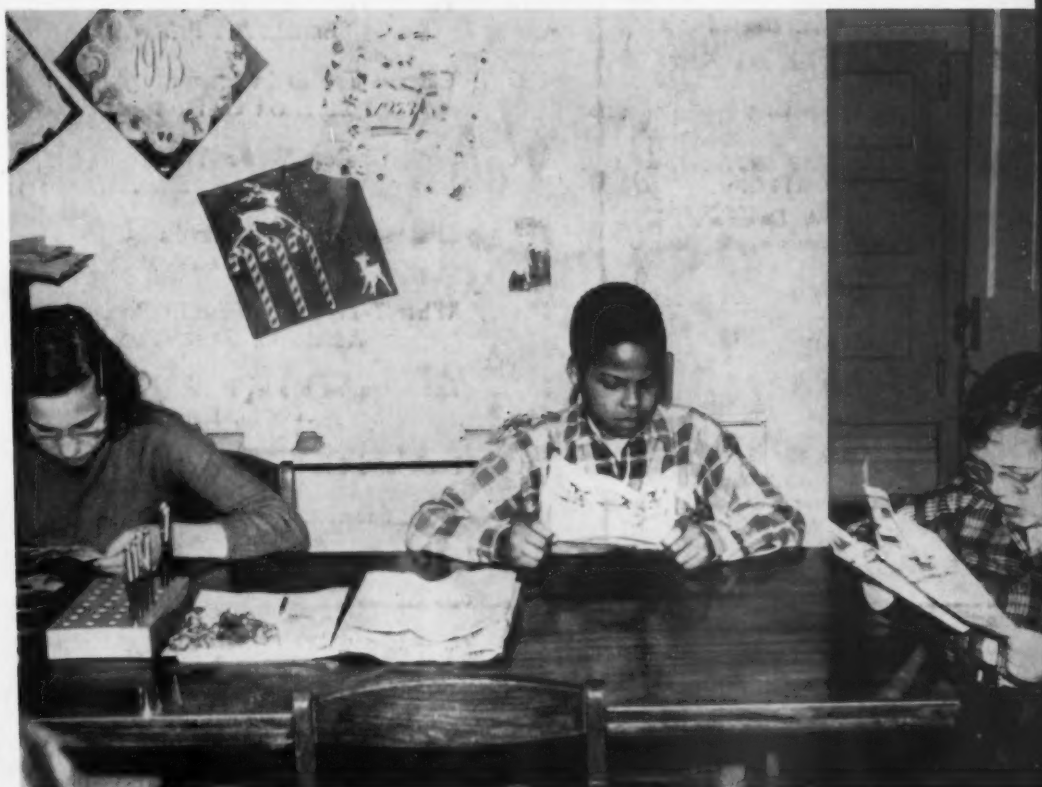
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

RECURRING READING

EXERCISE

POETRY AND PROSE

EXPERIMENTAL READING



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# Elementary ENGLISH

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# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXX

MARCH, 1953

No. 3

## *Success In Remedial Reading*

E. W. DOLCH<sup>1</sup>

After one has followed closely the remedial work that has been done with hundreds of poor readers, he begins to see emerge a recipe or formula for success in this most important work. He begins to see that cases which have been handled according to this recipe or formula have shown quick and marked improvement. He also sees that cases which have not been so handled, did not show improvement, or at least not the improvement that the conditions would lead us to expect.

Knowledge of this recipe for success in remedial reading is enlightening in many ways. It enables us to explain why some measures succeed and others do not. It enables us to understand what went wrong in particular cases. It can tell us how to direct our efforts, regardless of the particular techniques we are trying to use. The reason that this recipe for success is so helpful is that it tells what remedial work means *from the child's point of view*, not from the point of view of a teacher or of a clinic. Efforts which accord with this "child-point-of-view" get results with the child; those which do not so accord cannot get results unless some very special circumstances prevail.

The three requirements in the Recipe for Success in Remedial Reading will be presented and discussed in order.

### *1. Restore the Child's Security*

Every case in remedial reading is a case of failure. Every case of failure means defeat to the child, and as a result, a feeling in the child of fear, frustration, and insecurity. Every successful remedial reading teacher sees to it from the very start that, during the remedial reading session at least, this fear, frustration, or insecurity is removed. When the child is with this teacher, he feels relaxed and confident. He feels that he has things to be proud of. He knows he can learn and can succeed.

Of course the good remedial teacher achieves this end, first, through her hearty acceptance of the child as a friend and a worth-while person. She discovers the child's real interests and talks about them. She lets the child teach her some things which he knows better than she does. She makes the period a happy time, so that the child comes to it eagerly, and so that he is greatly disappointed if he must miss a remedial session.

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, The University of Illinois.

This first requirement of the Recipe for Successful Remedial Reading points immediately to the cause of failure in most remedial reading classes. Many of these classes are set up in such a way as to be, in effect, "dummy classes," where all are marked as failures. The children hate such a class, and they hate the teacher and the work and everything about it. Some few teachers can overcome this usually impossible situation and secure an atmosphere of friendliness, confidence, and "eagerness to be there," but these teachers are very few indeed. The moral from this situation therefore must be that if a remedial class cannot immediately "restore the child's security," it is much worse than no class at all.

This requirement of the Recipe also explains why remedial work is usually a failure when teachers are "assigned" to it. We may be able to assign teachers to Geography or Language or Arithmetic and get generally satisfactory results. But telling unwilling teachers that they are to be remedial teachers is simply setting the stage for failure. No teacher can "restore security" to failing children if she does not respect and like those children and if she does not feel glad to throw herself and all her capacities into the work of rescue of the children from their fear and insecurity. Such a rescue gives satisfaction that can hardly be found elsewhere. After a teacher has seen a defeated, stubborn, or resentful child open up into a frank, confident, friendly one, she never regrets the patience and kindness and genuine friendly interest she has invested in the case. But unwilling teachers do not get this success unless they are willing to give themselves to it for at least a trial.

## 2. *Discover the Child's "Area of Confidence" in Reading*

The typical remedial case in reading is in a confusion which has resulted from years of attempted teaching. The child knows odds and ends of words, scraps of sounding knowledge, has more or less guessing ability, has all sorts of habits of omission, insertion, skipping, and the like. But in this confusion there is no confidence. The child may get something right, but he is never sure what he can do or cannot do. A child in such a condition will sometimes attempt anything, and at other times he will attempt nothing. He may have good days and bad days on which his performance varies tremendously because of the variation of confidence or fear from one time to another.

Such a state of confusion furnishes no basis for remedial reading. Instead, we need to discover just what a child is sure he knows; and just what knowledge he can use without trace of fear or insecurity. Sometimes we find that a child seems to know several hundred words, but in a vague and insecure manner. After we eliminate the words he is largely guessing at, we may find he is down to less than a hundred. Then we try to speed up his recognition and find that half of these he does not know positively and surely. Finally we may find that there are fifty words that he knows surely, correctly, and all the time. We cannot fool him on those words. He knows he knows them and rattles them off. That, then, is this child's "*area of confidence*" in reading.

With another child, the common words may be no problem but he has a lot of confused knowledge of sounding. If

you give him time and allow all sorts of guessing, he seems to do very well. But when he is not confident, he starts calling letters and letter combinations all sorts of things, or he gets the letters right but makes the strangest words out of them. What is his "*area of confidence*" in sounding? We watch his sounding in reading, we test him out on the sounding elements, and finally come to the conclusion that all he is really sure of is the beginning consonants. If all we ask is how a word starts, he is sure of the answer. So that is all we expect at the moment, because we want him to be working at the start only in his "*area of confidence*."

The reason for this step is already apparent. We want the child to be happy and confident in his reading. We want him to be eager to attack reading. To secure this end, we must remove his fear, his feeling that "he cannot read." So we find out the area in which there is no fear. We practice in that area. We ask him to recognize only words he knows; or we ask him to sound only the elements he can sound with sureness. We keep in this area at first. Pretty soon, the child says, "Why, I can read." Of course he can, within his area of confidence. We want him to go on, but he must practice in his area of confidence first.

Here we see the explanation of a vast amount of failure in remedial reading. First of all, so many teachers refuse to go back to the area of confidence. If the child can read with confidence only at second grade level, they still give him a third grade book. If a child "knows something" about sounding, they ask him to sound out every word he meets. In short, they are unwilling to "go back to where he is." Going

back to where he really is, is the first rule for remedial reading. Without it, the child does not begin with an area of confidence. He continues the fear and insecurity with which he came to us. Then the chances of success are few.

In the second place, so many remedial teachers, even when they discover the area of confidence, immediately leave it for something new. They discover the words a child knows, and immediately begin teaching him new ones. They find what sounding he is sure of and immediately try to teach a whole series of new principles. The purpose of finding the "*area of confidence*" is to build confidence, and you cannot do so unless you *stay in that area* for a considerable time. The child must find immediate success and pleasure in his work, and that success and pleasure must continue for some days or weeks, or he will not change his attitude of fear of reading to one of a desire to attack reading. We must stay in that area of confidence until we are sure the child has developed security in the reading situation. With some children this takes much longer than others. We must gauge each individual case.

This part of the recipe tells us why with remedial cases we cannot usually read right up a series of standard readers with each book harder than the previous one. If the child finds success at one level, we must keep him on that level until he is secure in it. That is why we need sets of books all of the same reading difficulty, so that a child can read two, three, five, ten books all at one level until he feels a real expert at that level before we put him up against a harder level. We do have such

books now, one series of three at the second grade level, another of seven at the third grade level, another of over fifty at the fourth grade level, and so on.<sup>2</sup> We need more such series, covering wide ranges of interests, and staying in the same "area of confidence" until we find the child ready to go beyond.

### *3. Advance from the Area of Confidence by a Continual Series of "Success Steps"*

When the child is ready to attack something new, he must succeed at once or his fear and insecurity will return. Therefore, the teacher carefully plans each step in the progression, adapting her every plan to the individual child. What is a possible step for one child may be an impossible step for another, because every step must be accompanied with immediate success. If it is a matter of learning words, one child may learn five new words with pride and confidence while another can learn only two. If it is a matter of a harder book, one child may tackle one considerably harder while for another child the book must be only slightly more difficult. Each step must be a "success step" and not a step into failure.

The teacher measures such steps by her past experience with many children and by her knowledge of the individual child. She also takes each step cautiously and tentatively. Sometimes she offers a new book and takes it away almost immediately when she sees she has expected too much. Or she may take over the reading herself so that it is a "success step" in hearing a new story if not in reading one. In fact, the whole progress of remedial

<sup>2</sup>A list of available series will be sent by the author on request.

reading is a continual watching of new steps and often of taking quick steps backward when the pace has been set too fast.

Here we have clearly pointed out the reason for the failure of so-called "organized remedial reading." This organization sometimes takes the form of a remedial workbook. But who knows that the pace of the workbook will be the pace of the particular child? The workbook may be a "success-step" for some children and a "failure-step" for some. Or if a class is attempted, the pace will be right for some, too slow for some, and too fast for still others. The same is true for any set course in sounding that must be followed on a schedule. Such a course provided success-steps for a few but failure-steps for others. In fact, any attempt to make a sort of "curriculum of remedial reading" is a direct invitation to failure, since it cannot provide success-steps day by day for all children. (Those who think in terms of "remedial classes" should learn of the better results by individual or very small group methods.)

The principles that require an initial "area of confidence" also apply here. The new step has to be incorporated into the child's area of confidence. He must be very sure of the new step before he attempts another. It is very hard for a remedial teacher to keep this in mind. When a child does so well one day, she is immediately tempted to begin something new the next day. But what about the child's confidence and ease in using this new step? Can they be secured in one day? The teacher may be through teaching the new thing, but the child is not through mastering it. He needs time. So each step means really en-

larging the area of confidence, and confidence must be maintained.

This final step in the Recipe for Remedial Reading also explains why a remedial teacher needs such a great variety of materials and methods. Children differ so greatly that what forms a series of success steps for one will mean nothing but descent into failure for others. No method works with all children. No materials work equally well with all children. Certain methods and materials have a better "batting average," so to speak, than other materials and methods, but the remedial teacher needs a tremendous array of possible materials and methods if she is to arrange continual "success steps" for every kind of child she comes in contact with.

Finally, this third part of the Recipe explains why we cannot promise remedial results at any particular time. Parents and even school officials ask if we can restore a child to grade or secure a certain level of achievement by a certain date. We can say that for most children a certain prog-

ress is to be expected. But we cannot tell when this particular child will reach any particular level. We have to plan his success-steps as we go along. If we try to plan too far ahead, we find ourselves planning failures. How big steps can this child take? How long must he remain on one step before he can take another? No one knows this beforehand.

The Recipe for Success in Remedial Reading has therefore three requirements: (1) Restore the Child's Security, (2) Discover the Child's "Area of Confidence," and (3) Advance from the Area of Confidence by a series of "success steps." If this recipe is followed, success in the remedial work is assured. If this recipe is ignored, as it is in so many cases, there is no assurance of favorable results. So every plan for remedial work of any kind should be carefully checked against these three requirements of the Recipe, and so adjusted as to meet them. The three requirements cannot be ignored if we want happiness and progress for the children.

## *Speech In The Elementary School*

NAOMI C. CHASE<sup>1</sup>

The elementary school is a society of young persons living and learning together for the major portion of the days, the months, and the years of a formative period of their growth. In this modern society of young persons, oral communication is emphasized as the most frequently used means toward the meeting of minds.

This young society is democratic in the

modern elementary school. A democratic group recognizes the worth of the thinking of each individual and the right of each individual to express himself. Children accept their places and voice their thoughts in many ways, but the most frequently

<sup>1</sup>College of Education, The University of Minnesota. Miss Chase is a member of The Speech and Listening Committees of The National Council.

used method of communication is oral communication.

Special attention to speech is justified by the prominent position naturally given to speech all day and every day in the elementary school, but the place of speech in the curriculum is determined by the policies of the elementary school as a whole. The terms "course" and "period" usually are not associated with speech work nor are any other such terms that denote regular time set aside for "training." Rather, speech is involved in areas defined as experience units in the self-contained classroom. The urgency of need determines the prominence that speech skills will attain in the daily program. Individual pupil abilities determine for whom speech correction should be planned.

#### *Place of Speech in the School Experience*

The unit method of organizing work around centers of interest in the elementary school involve three fundamental processes of communication: (1) the receptive phase which includes the gathering of thoughts from appropriate sources of impressions; (2) the reflective phase which provides for discriminatory and organizational thought processes; and (3) the expressive phase which involves self expression of thoughts, either repeated without change or altered to include what may be called creative re-association of ideas. Obviously, oral communication is cared for when the third phase is fulfilled, with the benefits of the second phase and the first! For special purposes, writing becomes an important outcome of this process of "stimulus and response."

If one accepts this chain of thought reactions as a design of methodology that runs through the rich substance of an experience unit, then one attaches significance to the development of speech facility in all stages of growth in school society. Effective "sharing" and "learning through listening" flourish through efficient com-stimulus and response.

#### *Specific Ways of Working with Children in Speech*

Before there can be communication in the elementary school, or anywhere, there needs to be worthy subject-matter content. Something to say about the stars, about a school service activity, about a personal adventure, about the kind of clothing worn in the polar regions, about a good story—ideas springing from sources within the child—all this precedes oral communication. The first requirement of good speech is an appealing item of information, a personal slant about such an item, a related bit of information, or an opinion.

Before there can be communication of value there needs to be an audience—someone interested in hearing what is said. The modern school has expressed a faith in improved listening as a means of learning. It is within a listening-speaking situation in a group with a common interest that oral communication really functions. All members have the interest in common, but they have varying contributions to make. The ideas are fresh and they are needed. In the old school where everyone worked from one textbook, or from the same story, there was no vital need for communication except where differences of opinion were concerned. Vital oral communication exists where speakers and lis-

teners deal with vital subject-material content.

Granted that there is "something to say" and "someone to hear it," the next consideration is that of isolating for study the problems needing specific attention in speech. There is no type of unit in which it is recommended that skills not be considered. The problem is that of organization. The teacher with insight can detect areas in which the children need special help. He can, within the framework of the center of interest, provide for reaching specified goals. The improvement of oral communication may be one of the goals. Some authorities<sup>2</sup> suggest the following speech goals for at least ninety percent of the children. Some children may have special proficiency in this phase of communication. Others may need speech correction under the direction of a specialist.

1. Audibility
2. Distinctness of enunciation
3. Accurate pronunciation
4. Voice control in volume, pitch, quality, and melody
5. A delivery that is easy, natural, and free from distracting mannerisms
6. Audience contact

The teacher in the elementary school will realize that a forthright emphasis on the total speech program will cause children to lose sight of purposes for good speech. An isolation of a skill from the subject-matter that pointed out the need can become a means toward artificiality and meaningless drill. On the other hand,

<sup>2</sup>Tidyman, Willard F.; Marguerite Butterfield. *Teaching the Language Arts*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951. Page 26.

special times set aside for improvement of speech communication can enhance the pleasure and learning gained from a unit of work. Through practice on subject matter involved in the unit, children can be led to see the immediate values of audibility, quality of voice, and other characteristics that lead to understanding and enjoyment.

During these special times for speech improvement, the teacher will need to know where the members of the class need help. One or two emphases at a time probably will be enough. *Audibility* may be judged by the simple means of raising hands quietly when the speaker cannot be heard without a straining of ears. The members of the group can be made to feel that they have a right to hear what is being said, and that the speaker has a responsibility to his listeners that makes it necessary that he be heard.

Distinctness of *enunciation* is a problem in nearly every classroom. The singing time, the creative-dramatics hour, the reading and spelling time—these are places where an emphasis may be made on the clear sounding of each syllable in words because such careful enunciation will improve the messages carried. Educators agree that good enunciation and correct spelling go together for most children. The message of a song is lost when sounds are not clearly defined. Word beginnings, word middles, and especially word endings need special consideration. Children can work out self-evaluation charts to aid in personal improvement in this characteristic of good speech.

Errors in *pronunciation* can be even

more specifically handled. One authority<sup>3</sup> is in agreement with many others when it is said that the most frequent errors in pronunciation are:

1. Incorrect vowel quality: (...get, was, pretty, catch, because, just)
2. Incorrect consonant quality: (...length, what, luxury, immediately, walking,)
3. Misplaced accent: (...positively, research, museum, umbrella, discharge)
4. Omission of requisite sounds: (...recognize, family, really, mirror, nearer, February)
5. Sounding of silent letters: (...often, toward, evening, parliament, salmon, corps)
6. Addition of superfluous sounds: (athlete, mischievous, once, prairie, film, elm)
7. The utterance of sounds in their improper order: (...children..., hundred, larynx)

In addition to errors of enunciation and pronunciation are the closely related problems of articulation. According to one author,<sup>4</sup> the following points are the most common:

1. *s* lisp
2. *t* made for *k*
3. *d* said for *g*, *th*, *r*, *l*
4. *w* for *wh*
5. *in* for *ing*

Closely related to the articulation

<sup>3</sup>Henry, N. B. (Ed.). *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*. The Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, Part II., 1944.

<sup>4</sup>McKee, Paul. *Language in the Elementary School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939. Page 318.

problem is that of poor articulation combined with incorrect consonant and vowel quality, united with incorrect pronunciation, to produce such sound combinations as "yagotta," "alotta," and "yagonta!" These types of errors become habitual with some children. A habit of correct responses needs to be established and children in the classroom can help one another.

*Voice control* is something that the elementary teacher needs to consider most seriously. Modern youngsters do not limit their shouting of expressions of joy and excitement to such occasions as sports contests in the gymnasium. They "shout all day!" Anyone who has heard two little girls, walking with their heads close together, shouting to one another at the tops of their voices so one can hear them for a block away, knows that young people need to be taught moderation in most things! "Speak only so that those who are intended to hear may hear" is the usual admonition of the thoughtful and patient teacher. A thorough understanding of how much volume is needed for carrying out that rule requires teaching, re-teaching, and teaching again.

*Delivery* is a term that is seldom used in conversations among elementary teachers. It is in the elementary school, however, that good habits of easy, natural, and free delivery are begun. The teacher needs to have a kindly approach to the problem because children are sensitive to their personal characteristics of stance, facial contortions, and other conspicuous accompaniments of speaking. It is unlikely that sharp criticism from peers increases ease of communication. Understanding and an objective point of view should be fostered. Then

such pupil remarks as "Your mouth goes on one side when you talk," and "You stick your stomach out" will not become centers of discussion by the group when the ideas expressed need to be the subjects of comment.

### Conclusions

The elementary teacher strives to lead the young people to orderly growth in all phases of communication, the most-used of which seems to be oral speech. He painstakingly plans his resource units to include needed help in the skills of communication, with special emphases on pleasurable and efficient sharing of thoughts related to a rich center of interest. Whenever the pleasure or the efficiency of sharing through oral communication is impaired by speech problems that can be adequately handled with the age group in the classroom, the teacher provides training experiences. Speech anomalies caused by organic defects and speech problems too complex to handle with the facilities at hand may need to be referred to specialists. In that case, the teacher tries not to do anything that will increase the problem. If there is contact between the regular teacher and the specialist, and there should be, the regular teacher learns exactly what he can do to support the clinic's plan.

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## The Old and The New

JOANN S. ROUNSLEY<sup>1</sup>

Tommy, aged nine and in the fourth grade, chose language as the school subject which he liked *least*.

"It's just corny, that's why I don't like it," Tommy said.

Bobby, who is Tommy's age and in

another fourth grade section of the same school, picked language as the subject which he liked *best*.

<sup>1</sup>Fourth grade teacher in the D. A. Marshall School, Harrisburg, Pa. This article was written in the Summer Session Class of Dr. George Murphy at Pennsylvania State College.

Both Tommy and Bobby, in a recent achievement test, had superior scores on the part that showed a pupil's natural language ability. Is it just chance that Bobby likes language class, while Tommy considers it "corny"?

Tommy is in Miss Martin's class. Miss Martin has a specified time for each subject. Tommy knows that from 11:10 until 11:40 every day he'll hold his opened language book while he's contemplating a hamburger with onions for lunch. The children on all their papers must be careful to put their names in the upper right hand corner. Anyone who neglects to do so will get O for the day.

Miss Martin tells her pupils not to use words unless they are sure they can spell them; consequently, the children try not to use new words. The boys and girls have to be very careful to insert all the necessary punctuation marks, even though it's not clear to them just *why* they're used.

Something that seems silly to Tommy is the heading and salutation in a letter. When he asked Miss Martin why they were necessary, she told him not to ask such silly questions. Oh well, Tommy supposes the English language is just meant to confuse people, so there's no real reason to try to make sense out of it.

Tommy can never think of what to write when the assignment is a business letter. Last week the class wrote to the Burpee Seed Company ordering twelve dozen packs of petunia seeds. Why anyone would want all those petunias was beyond Tommy's comprehension. When he questioned Miss Martin about it, she was very cross.

This week Tommy's class is studying a chapter on creative writing. At the end of the week, all the boys and girls will be required to write about the beauty of a sunset. Tommy doesn't know what to write. Besides, anything he *does* write will be torn apart by Miss Martin when he reads it aloud. The same thing happens when giving oral book reviews. She frequently stops Tommy to correct his grammar and then Tommy gets so confused that he forgets what he had planned to say. "If Miss Martin would ever say anything good about anything I did," said Tommy once, "I'd drop dead."

Now let's look at Bobby's language class. His teacher is Miss Green who uses the same textbook as Miss Martin. Bobby's class is also studying creative writing this week. He is looking forward to Friday when he can read his story about an Indian attack on the settlers. Lois, a classmate, said she wanted to make up a fairy tale with a beautiful princess in it and Arthur, who is interested in science, is planning to write about his experiments with his chemistry set.

It's funny the things you learn about the kids when they read their stories, Bobby thought. There was this new fellow, Harold. Everyone thought he was an awful jerk. Then Harold wrote a story about the farm on which he lived. His father raised so many animals, and even Harold himself owned a lamb and a goat. Gee, it must be fun to live on a farm! Well, the class and Miss Green were so interested that the entire room visited Harold's farm and did they have a keen time! Now Tommy and the other fellows think Harold's a pretty good guy.

The week following the farm show, Miss Green had the class write letters to their cousins or friends in other cities telling about the show. That was easy; there was so much to write. Of course, this matter of heading and salutation had seemed mighty confusing. Miss Green said she didn't blame them for being puzzled about it. She said that the heading was necessary for two reasons: the person receiving the letter would have your correct address and also if the letter got lost, the Post Office would know where to look in order to return the letter. As for the salutation—when we see a person we know, we say "hello". The salutation is the way we say "hello" in a letter. That makes sense, Bobby thought. It wasn't confusing after that.

After Christmas vacation, the class wrote "Thank You" notes to friends or relatives from whom they had received gifts. This wasn't so hard for anyone except Benny who didn't get any presents because he was Jewish, and his family didn't give gifts. Miss Green had had Benny write about Yom Kipper. The class was very much interested in Benny's paper. Bobby realized that the Jews had, after all, a religion much like his. Then the class decided to observe Yom Kippur.

Miss Green points out mistakes, but she always tells the children something complimentary about their work first. While the pupils are working on their assignments, Miss Green is willing to help them about anything which they don't understand. She usually checks papers before the boys and girls hand them in. Thus, she is able to point out any possible errors.

Bobby even likes word drills, for Miss

Green makes up stories about the words. For instance, when the class was studying *saw* and *seen*, Miss Green told them that *saw* is a big strong giant who can work alone. *Seen* is a little elf who needs someone to help him. His best friends—has, had, and have—always like to work with him.

The exciting stories that the class dramatizes are fun too. Billy, who had such a soft speaking voice that no one could understand him, was selected to act in the stories about George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. Now the class can hear him much better.

Another lesson in language which the children liked was writing descriptions of their classmates. Miss Green told them that they should say only nice things about each other. This wasn't easy for Bobby, as he had to write about George whom he didn't like. However, after giving the matter some thought, he decided that George *had* some good points. Bobby then guessed that maybe George wasn't so bad after all.

Recently during telling time, Joe said that he thought the Ranger Tex television program stunk. That was the week the children were writing letters to their favorite movie and television stars, so Miss Green suggested that Joe write to Ranger Tex. Joe's letter was a pip all right, thought his horrified classmates. The words he used most often were "stunk", "corny", and "rocks in your head". But Miss Green did not seem shocked. She merely asked Joe how *he* would feel if he were Ranger Tex and someone wrote a letter like that to *him*. She told the class that Ranger Tex would pay more attention

to a letter that would suggest how his program could be improved. She then read the class a story about a bet made by the cold, blustery north wind and the warm, friendly sun on who could make a man take off his coat. The kind sun was the winner. During recess that day, Bobby was prepared to jump on Terry who wasn't good in games and who was always playing mean tricks on other boys and girls. Then Bobby remembered that the north wind, for all its bluster, did not win the bet. He tried showing Terry *how* to do better in games. Although Terry still isn't good in games, he has stopped being nasty to other children.

Tommy, unfortunately, is learning to dislike language because of having a teacher whose main objective is to cram the intricate rules of English down the throats of her pupils without explaining the all important "why". A low value is placed on creativeness and individuality and the mastery of the mechanics of language is considered the ultimate goal.

Bobby's enthusiasm stems from the fact that he is learning, by varied and stimulating classroom experiences, the importance of language as a tool for effective and enriched social living.

## *Taking Folk Literature Seriously*

CALVIN T. RYAN<sup>1</sup>

In one of the modern books on how to teach children's literature, the author warns the teacher not to allow the children to take the old folk tales too seriously. Knowing the sensitivity of some children, and the complete gullibility of still others, perhaps the advice is well given. The more sophisticated among the group will never think whether the story really happened, but will enjoy to the limit wishing it were true, or playing like it really did happen. So much of their school work, including many of their stories, will be about the here-and-now, about steam-engines, fire trucks, and mechanical toys, the more alive boys and girls may truly suffer from what the English writer and critic, Geoffrey Trease, calls "imaginative malnutrition." The child's imagination was not given him

to be ignored, nor crushed, but to be guided and cultivated. The child's world of the imagination is just as real to him as the world adults call real, and I firmly believe needs just as much attention.

My years of working with folk literature have led me to conclude that historically at least those tales were once taken seriously, and may have been used for direct instruction, probably for warnings of how to avoid the Evil One, or harmful consequences. Obviously they are often closely allied with the superstitions of a people. The belief that the wicked fairies would come and take away the child, or leave a changeling in its place, might have been an early method of teaching mothers to look after their babies. I

<sup>1</sup>State College, Kearney, Nebraska.

suppose every normal girl has the experience of Cinderella in dreaming of all the magic that will some day bring her Prince Charming to her. Likewise every normal boy kills a few giants, climbs magic beanstalks, and finds some great abundance of wealth. If we knew the truth of the boyhood of our great inventors and creative artists, we should probably learn they were highly imaginative.

"Little Red Riding Hood" may have lost its potency of warning girls to be on the lookout for "wolves," for these girls have been taught to sing, "Who's Afraid Of The Big Bad Wolf?" Nevertheless, the warning is still there, and we have girls who might have profited from it, but did not.

We are told that the *Gesta Romanorum* is a collection of little sermons in stories, doubtless used by the monks in their effort to teach the laity who could best understand the lesson through a story. The story remains the oldest teaching device known to man. It often teaches indirectly, but just as often teaches directly. Jesus chose the parable as his chief device. We read those parables and find them still applicable. Forgetting that Jesus was an Oriental, used Oriental language, we find some who confuse the Knowledge of Fact with the Knowledge of Meaning. The Good Samaritan may have actually lived, he may have found the traveller robbed, and then taken care of him. No one stops to question the facts. Jesus wants us to get the Meaning of the story.

So with our folk tales. They may have become nothing more than entertaining reading. They may have dropped their original Meaning, and have shed every

basis of fact, but the evolution of the story does not destroy the fact that at one time it may have been taken seriously.

The true folk tale, the traditional variety that has come down to us because of some quality that has proved its immutability, is apt to be a cross-section of life. There must be something universal in the Cinderella story, or we would not have so many different versions from so many different races. While the germ of the story remains the same, the exposition and development, will bear the stamp of the people whence it came. The Chinese Cinderella embodies the beliefs of the ancient Chinese. The many transformations of Cinderella's real mother, and the ultimate but justifiable fate of the step-mother seem unspeakably cruel, but they are not unbelievable for the Chinese with the background of the time when the story must have risen. The version we have shows all the marks of the Western world. We even prefer the "glass slipper" to what we are told was the original prosy "leather" one.

I believe the anthropologist tell us that the scattered tribes, even though they did not know one another existed, rose above the line of civilization independently, yet each tribe passed through very much the same religious responses, and used very much the same literary forms. They chanted or they sang their emotional responses. The oldest part of our Old Testament is thought to be the emotional outbursts at the discovery of an instrument with cutting power on both edges, or the discovery of a well in all that wide oasis of dry and sandy environment. Tennyson speaks of poetry as being "the oldest tongue in all this world." The child sings

before he talks. Primitive people chant and sing before they have a written language. But their songs and chants were taken seriously. The Opies, in their Introduction to *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, say that "the overwhelming majority of nursery rhymes were not in the first place composed for children." (p. 3). These editors say that some of the rhymes were originally stanzas "from ballads printed in the seventeenth century." But they re-echo the beliefs and manners of the period, and the people whence they came.

Anyone acquainted with the history of literature for children knows that in the early years very little was written directly for the child's pleasure. They must have listened in as their elders related the tales of wonder of their still older forebearers. Just that is what Elizabeth Godfrey implies in her *English Children In The Olden Times*. The glee-men traveled up and down the land and fired old and young with their tales of wonder. *Jack The Giant Killer*, *Robin Goodfellow*, and *Tom Thumb* must have been included in the gleemen's repertoire. The professional entertainer seems to have preceded the pedagogue in the homes of the great men of that time. The children must have gathered around this man of wonders and thrilled with exploits of wonder as he related them. *The Red Bull of Norway* must have been taken to England by the Saxon invaders, and it preceded the form which has come down to us as *Beauty And The Beast*.

Elizabeth Godfrey does not minimize the importance of these wonder tales. They served a serious purpose. "There

was no unwholesome, namby-pamby sentiment about these old tales," Miss Godfrey writes, "but they all, whether fairy tales or gestes of men of renown, inculcated a high morality, a love of country, chivalry towards the weak, an adventurous spirit, a brave heart, a joyous delight in outdoor life, in the song of birds in the wood, in May mornings in the field."

So the old folk tales may have suffered a noticeable degeneracy from their first telling, but the best of them do leave a residue that should do more for the child's imagination and the child's emotive life than will some of our commercialized stories of machinery, our juvenile radio programs of Superman, or our comics of Tarzan and the Apes.

Mrs. Duff includes a very fine "Brief Fairy Tales" in her delightful *Bequest of Wings*. Mrs. Duff includes under the "fairy tale" "all stories that have the element of magic, of enchantment, of unseen forces governing the course of events." She would include the tale of wonder, I think, and practically all traditional stories other than the out and out myths and fables. And she does not consider them "lies." She says children are still enjoying living in a world where there remains a sense of wonder. They do not concern themselves so much with what is probable and what is possible as adults do. Their imagination leaves room for miracles.

Therefore the writer who warns the teacher not to take the folk tales too seriously is giving advice that needs to be somewhat modified to prevent the prosy-minded teacher from presenting them too lightly, or showing an attitude toward

them that will confuse the child whose imagination is not yet crushed. The ordinary child needs his imagination so that he will have some place to retreat for reinforcements to carry on his battle of life. I suspect many adults wish more than once during some struggle for existence that they could just live for awhile in a time and place where things would turn out as they wanted them to. As Mrs. Arbuthnot says, while books are no substitute for living, they do help us to "add immeasurably to its richness." I believe one criticism that has been made by scientists and engineers on the job against the younger men just out of our schools of science and engineers, is that the younger men know their techniques, have certain skills, but are seriously handicapped by not having developed any imagination. Perhaps even those schools can afford more time for books that will at least keep alive the normal imagination. If not, then the home and the elementary school will have additional reason for nurturing the imagination of the younger children, with the hope that later years in specialized schools will not wholly crush what has been given life.

Children of what Miss Godfrey calls the "bookless age" were blessed with a very satisfying substitute in the wonder tales of the gleeman, and even rhymes and jingles of the nurse in the nursery. And if we may take Miss Godfrey's conclusion, those experiences did affect the outlook of the children. Just as the Gospel is older than the Gospels, so are the folk tales older than the story-books. The stimulation of the child's imagination went on apace, and the truths he heard fit the "broad fact of human nature."

What of today? "The steam-engine routs Faërie," Walder de la Mare says. But Geoffrey Trease says, "It is not so much the steam-engine that is routing Faërie. It is the banality of the cheap fairy-book as sold in chain-stores and small stationers' " That is, apparently in England as in the United States, the child's interest in stories, in books, is being exploited by *the trade*. Like writers for woodpulp and the true-story-tribe, writers for the cheap fairy-book have established a formula and depend upon that rather than their own creative genius. We can perhaps join Mr. Trease in his imprecatory prayer that, "may the only royalties he ever sees be Oberon and Titania, terrible of brow, as he quakes and grovels before their thrones" (*Tales Out Of School*, pp. 48-49).

What of today? The children listen to the absurd adventures of their favorite cowboy as given over the radio, or see them in television. One speaker went so far recently as to say television was turning us all back to cavemen, practiced only in looking out on the world through a small peephole in our cave. I hardly expect from the newer mediums of entertainment, motion pictures, radio and television, any of the results Miss Godfrey found from listening to the tales of wonder in the bookless age. We must realize that in order to think rightly, one must feel rightly.

We must establish the seriousness of folk literature. By that I do not mean we are to tell children folk tales really did happen. On the other hand, as we have been told, Who knows? Perhaps back there when the story was first told, mice may have turned into horses and pumpkins

into coaches. But not here in our cities. We can "play like" the story really happened. We can say, Don't you wish it really could happen? The children are not going to quibble about probabilities. They are too filled with the wish that the story were true.

One can travel through New England and become amazed at the number of pieces of furniture that came over on the *Mayflower*! What a boat! One can travel through Morristown, New Jersey, and marvel at the number of places George Washington spent the night. One can visit around Fairfax County, Virginia, and be told in all seriousness that George Washington spent the night "here," and very soon another place where he stayed, and still another. We smile and say, "Washington must never have been at home!"

But that is not the point. Story-making is still going on. We are romantically inclined, and we like our heroes to have many adventures. If we can establish the truth of a statement, or get enough to believe we have established the truth of a statement, we no longer quibble about possibilities. We who have seen a run on a bank have seen a life-like demonstration of *Henney-Penney*. We who have lived in a small town, where such gossip passes over the back-fence between neighbors, have seen another acting out of *Henney-Penney*. Folk tales are logical. They are cross-sections of life. They are usually more concerned with the Truth of Meaning than with the Truth of Fact. They can well be taken seriously.

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## Family Folklore

ELIZABETH PILANT<sup>1</sup>

English teachers in this country can profit from the experience of language teachers in the Irish Republic in using folklore topics in the teaching of composition. The Irish National Folklore Commission (a governmental agency) was able to arrange with the Ministry of Education that teachers in certain grades and areas during the school year 1937-38 should substitute the gathering and recording of Irish folklore for regular instruction in theme writing. Standard instructions, records, and notebooks were sent to the cooperating schools and a vast amount of material was gathered which has been de-

posited for study in the national folklore archive. In this country no one would be so foolhardy as to suggest that we in the immediate future undertake any such project, but we can individually try our hands at the task or at least profit from the use of folklore topics in theme writing.

My own experience would seem to show that family folklore topics meet the two prime requirements of theme writing: a lively sense of communication on the part of the student and a lively audience reaction on the part of the teacher and classmates. Family folklore is a field in

<sup>1</sup>Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Ind.

which the student is in a good position to be the authority as compared with his classmates and his teachers and even the world in general. This arises from the fact that he writes about something peculiarly within the knowledge of himself and his own close circle of kinship.

Family folklore as a theme topic is likely to meet the requirement of originality and vitality, since it rises directly out of the experience of the writer and his close relatives. Such stories should be well done since they have already become well organized and pretested for audience appeal in a long series of retellings within the family circle. There is every reason to suppose that the student will exert himself to do the best job possible in matters both of form and audience impact. Who would want to admit that his family did not have experiences and incidents to relate as interesting as any one else in the community?

Obviously, family folklore themes can be very useful in counselling students insofar as they are very revealing of the background of the pupil and of his family both as to content and motivation. There is ample opportunity for satisfactory self expression for the writer. Through the students the community itself acquires a voice not only for its present day but for all its

past. All members of the family find an outlet for their knowledge and heritage.

Motivation in the students can be further reinforced by any teacher who is genuinely interested in folklore herself. She can show them how they can be doing a very valuable service to scholarship and country by gathering folk tales, anecdotes, folk speech (complete with dates, places, sources). Although much of the material might have been evoked by a more usual type of theme topic, the freshness of the classification and the feeling of new significance in the over-all task can give real drive in the schoolroom.

Students and teachers can derive even more tangible motivation from the fact that the American Folklore society gives an annual award to the class that does the best job of gathering folklore. The materials may be interesting enough and illustrative enough of the background of the whole community that the students will want to have the best of the stories brought together in a mimeographed or printed collection. The material may be used as a basis for plays or pageants or parades of a community-wide nature. The students can be quite flattered if their gatherings are accepted for deposit in one of the many folklore archives now maintained by American college and folklore societies.

# *Current Trends in Elementary Libraries*

ELLINOR G. PRESTON<sup>1</sup>

"And here is our library," said the principal to the visitor he was showing around the school. The visitor tried to conceal his shock as he peered into a latticed enclosure under the stairs and in the dim light was able to discern a set of reference books (still shiny new, in spite of a copy-right date of several years previous) flanked by a motley assortment of sample textbooks, cheap editions of popular novels of past years, a few collections of poems and stories, some old readers, and a set of the complete works of Sir Walter Scott. The door to the enclosure was securely padlocked, and undisturbed dust on everything bore witness to the fact that the key on the principal's key ring was called into service only rarely.

An improbable, if not impossible story? Perhaps it is, but such a thing has happened—and not as long ago as might be thought. This was an extreme case, to be sure, and fortunately library situations like this are fast disappearing from the scene. The trend today is certainly toward more and better school libraries. This trend and the current emphasis on the library in the elementary school is not just a new fad in education, a new way to use a portion of already strained school budgets, nor a nebulous ideal to be attained after everything else that goes to make the modern school has been achieved. It is the evidence of a need which, though long existing, is now catching up with us in such a way that it cannot longer be denied.

Books have always been the chief tool

of education, and for thousands of years libraries have been accepted as an important agency for promoting and preserving culture and learning. As learning has become more widespread, and as education, especially in the democratic countries, is considered to be the birthright of every individual, so the need for libraries has grown. Strangely enough, the recognition of the need and the consequent efforts and accomplishments to meet it have progressed from the top down instead of from the bottom up. Universities and colleges have for many years had libraries. Since the turn of the century the library in the secondary school has been steadily gaining ground, and now is universally accepted, certainly in the United States, as standard equipment. Not until comparatively recently, however, has the library in the elementary school come in for anything like the consideration it should have had all along.

Of course, even many years ago, a few farsighted persons made provision for libraries in elementary schools, but they were the exception rather than the rule. As a general thing the functioning elementary school library was an appendage, a luxury, an extra, rather than an integral part of the school and its program of education. Its philosophy was more passive than active. Often housed in a remote or inaccessible room or in the principal's office, with little, if any, of the physical

<sup>1</sup>Supervisor of Libraries, Richmond (Va.) Public Schools.

equipment to make it an inviting place; The elementary school library of the past was most often used primarily as a store house for materials which had been acquired more or less by accident and with little regard for suitability. The books were there; possibly they were cataloged; and there was some circulation, but doubtless the library added little of enrichment to an instructional process which closely followed textbooks and offered little opportunity for pupils to explore and investigate. It was an evidence of the prevailing philosophy of that day which failed to provide for individual differences and which kept to the narrowly restricted scope of a few textbooks.

As the philosophy of our schools has changed, so has the philosophy of the school library. Today the library is a dynamic, functioning part of the total educational program at all levels; and it can no more be omitted in the elementary school than can any of the other subjects, services, or activities which go into the offerings for young children. The school library, however, in assuming its responsibility as an integral part of the total educational program, is a unique, specialized type of library service, quite different from university and public libraries. Its function is the provision and circulation of books and related materials and materials services to the teachers and pupils of the school, and guidance in the use of them; it is in every way an educational institution. Its physical quarters and equipment, its atmosphere, its materials, its organization, its administration, its personnel, and its philosophy are such as to contribute to the school's program in a very real and vital

way. The good school library of today has retained those elements of general library philosophy and organization which contribute toward this end; at the same time it has developed new philosophies, new techniques and new methods as demanded by its unique situation, specialized clientele and specific purpose. The philosophy of school library service has developed as the philosophy underlying the entire instructional program has developed.

The physical quarters of the library in the elementary school should be one of the most attractive spots in the school. This is not too difficult to achieve in the new building where the library suite (reading room, conference room, and workroom, with other possible rooms for storage, and use of audio-visual materials, is incorporated in the overall planning. Lack of ideal facilities, however, need not preclude having an attractive library center. Although in the ideal situation the library needs more room, many very attractive libraries have been established in converted classrooms by removing blackboards and installing standard library furniture. Walls painted with soft, pleasing colors, harmonizing window draperies, one or two appropriate pictures, some plants and perhaps a bit of decorative pottery, all add up to an atmosphere conducive to quiet (not silent) enjoyment of library materials. In such a setting children are introduced to the pleasure of exploring the unlimited field of printed matter, experimenting with likes and dislikes, searching out information and becoming acquainted with the best in the realm of children's literature.

But a beautiful room important as it

is, is not enough. The primary obligation of the elementary school library today is that of providing a wide range of materials which will serve the instructional program of the school, the so-called extra-curricular activities of the school, the individual needs of the pupils both for information and recreation, and the needs of the teachers for materials which will make learning experiences pleasant, exciting, challenging and profitable. The word "materials" rather than "books" is used advisedly, for the elementary school library of today provides charts, maps, graphs, and many other media of communication, also recordings, pictures (flat and projected).

Today's children are interested in everything, and in the children's books available today will be found much valuable, authentic and accurate information about everything. Furthermore, the library of the modern elementary school takes into consideration the individual differences in children and provides for them, so that each child may read at his own present level and may receive stimulation **and guidance which challenge and help him to enjoy, to increase his reading competences, to refine his reading tastes.**

Magazines are becoming more and more important on the elementary level and provide easy-to-read, up-to-the-minute material. While often read purely for pleasure, magazines also make a valuable contribution to the acquisition of knowledge and create a desire for further investigation.

The Information File in the modern school library furnishes a wealth of pamphlets, clippings, pictures and other mater-

ial not in book form. Much of this material is free or inexpensive; some of it (especially some types of pictures) is rather costly; but its very nature makes it an added attraction, and it fills a need not met in any other way.

Many school libraries maintain a collection of films, filmstrips, slides, recordings, etc., which are used to advantage in teaching; and a few have dolls, curios, and other realia which can add immeasurably to the enrichment of the program of social studies and other fields.

In short, the materials of the elementary school library today are many and varied. They are of any type which will contribute toward the immediate needs and ultimate goals in a program of education which seeks to help the child to become a useful, happy, well-adjusted individual in society. They answer needs on every level, from the picture book for the tiny tot who has not yet learned to read, to reliable information in such areas as television, atomic energy, music, art, and comparative religions for the alert, groping and receptive mind of the young adolescent. They provide for leisure hours and purely recreational pursuits. They create within the child an awareness of the world about him and open the door to the limitless field of knowledge.

The elementary school library does not seek to acquire and preserve materials merely for the sake of preservation. Its function is to bring to its school program and to its pupils those materials which will be of immediate and constructive use. In order to do this effectively, every item must be readily and easily accessible to the pupils. Therefore, organization is essential.

Organization according to accepted standards of library procedure, with perhaps some simplification and modification, serves not only to make the collection of material accessible and useful to the teachers and pupils, but also affords the child training in the use of libraries. This knowledge will serve him well as he goes on to his use of secondary school, college, and public libraries.

The elementary school library is administered with its major purpose of service to the school always in mind. Its hours are those best suited to the needs of its users. Its budget is planned to provide adequate materials of all sorts, with emphasis on those types which are most used. This budget is spent with care, taking into consideration the philosophy of the school or school system; the interest and backgrounds of the pupils; and the vast realm of books and other materials offered on the market in the name of children's literature and from which must be chosen only that which has real quality and lasting worth. Its rules and regulations, which should be as few as possible, are all formulated in line with school policies. They are flexible enough to take care of many differing situations without defeating the chief purpose of the whole library program by repelling rather than inviting borrowers. The old idea of silence in the library has been discarded. This does not mean that chaos and confusion are allowed. It does mean that the library time should be an informal working period. Pupils are permitted to move about, to converse with the librarian, the teacher, or other pupils, and to chuckle over a particularly interesting discovery. So long as an atmosphere of

orderliness prevails, absolute quiet is not necessary and, indeed, not desirable.

Perhaps the most important single factor in the modern elementary school library is the librarian. The elementary school librarian of today is essentially a teacher. As such, in addition to training in library philosophy and techniques, she knows and understands child growth and development, and educational theory and technique. She is able to work with children in such a way as to satisfy them, to challenge them, to interest them, and to create within them a thirst for knowledge. She is conscientious, industrious, pleasant, attractive, and willing to take time to answer the simplest question or to explain the intricacies of the card catalog. She is well-versed in the field of children's literature and knows how to suggest just the right book to suit the need, the interest, or the mood of the child. She knows how to work with other teachers and with parents toward the achievement of instructional and personal goals.

The time has come when the library is being recognized as just as important to an adequate program of elementary education as any subject taught, any activity engaged in, or any facility provided. Its potential is unlimited, for who can say what heights an individual may attain, if in his formative childhood years he acquires an ability to read intelligently, a love for literature in its broadest sense, a sense of pleasure and enjoyment in contact with books, and an appreciation of the unlimited resources always at his command through the use of books and libraries.

Libraries are expensive, but perhaps

no other investment is more worthwhile. Lack of all the desirable features and large numbers of books need not be too great a barrier. With even a meager budget, it is surprising how fast a collection grows, once it is started and *properly administered*. Furthermore, the pooling of all books in one central collection and making it possible for every child in the school to visit the library regularly and frequently, assures much more use of each individual item, since in a central collection every book is available to every child in school rather than to a limited number in a classroom. If the personnel budget cannot yet provide a librarian, much can be done by teachers, interested parents, and others toward functional organization. Many

school systems employ a supervisor of libraries, who can stimulate interest among teachers and parents and can supervise groups of volunteer workers in performing the mechanical processes of the library organization.<sup>2</sup> Coordination of the program under a supervisor can also effect a bigger return on the investment made in materials. None of these measures, however, can be the total answer and should never be an avenue of escape from the inevitable need for a library with adequate quarters, materials, organization, and personnel in every school.

<sup>2</sup>See "Parents Man the Assembly Line," p. 90 *Elementary School Libraries Today*, 30th year-book of the Department of Elementary School Principals, N. E. A.

## *Sixth Graders Write A Play*

DALLAS K. BEAL<sup>1</sup>

This is a description of the major activities a sixth grade class and their teacher found quite stimulating and interesting while carrying out a broad unit-of-work. The intent of the author is to describe in some detail how these activities arose, how they were carried out and some values he sees in this kind of experience for children. The author does not propose to suggest the writing of plays as typical of activities that center around all units, because he realizes that a most important value of units-of-work is the opportunity teachers and children have to plan and work out creative experiences of their own.

### *Committee Reports Can Be Interesting*

After considerable discussion and ex-

ploration in search of available materials about interesting studies, this group of sixth graders centered their interest on "Prehistoric Times." The study grew to include finding the answers to questions about "The Origin of the Earth," "How the Earth Developed," "Prehistoric Plants and Animals" and "Man's Beginnings on the Earth."

Previous to the research in answer to questions about "Man's Beginnings on Earth" the children had written interesting reports, outlined them on experience chart paper and used film strips, maps and pictures to good advantage. They displayed a good deal of satisfaction with the success they had in reporting in this manner.

<sup>1</sup>Agnes Russell Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

As the youngsters began finding answers to questions about how early man lived—that is, his methods and problems of communication, transportation, community living, housing and finding food, a question arose concerning the method the committees might use in reporting. After some discussion, those who had first mentioned doing something “different” suggested that possibly each committee might, in some way, dramatize their reports. This suggestion seemed to “catch fire” and during the discussion that followed the teacher and children talked about the various ways reports could be dramatized and the problems that might be faced. The teacher suggested that those who were interested might try their hand at such a venture and see what happened.

The following day each committee was busily engaged in writing scripts that included the information they found while doing research. One group was busy making potato puppets, and a large box for a stage was in the process of construction. Another group did not have enough people to complete their list of players so they were giving tryouts to people from other committees. Still another group divided the work so that while some were writing others were making light bulb puppets.

Within a week after beginning work on dramatizing their reports, all the committees had written a short play ten to fifteen minutes in length that essentially included most of the information in each child's report. The children eagerly anticipated each report with an interest that surpassed the former methods of reporting.

Was much of the information lost in

dramatizing the report? Would not the children become more interested in the action than in the words and thus lose much of the meaning and content? Quite the contrary was true. A few of the children had made simple costumes and some scenery to go with the dialogue and by putting the information into a setting, however amateur it might be, tended to make the report more realistic to each youngster. One child remarked he felt as if he were actually with these prehistoric people. Also, the fact that some committees were requested to give their report again gave added emphasis to content, feeling, appreciation and understanding of early man's problems. Furthermore, the necessity for children in one committee to help those of another helped do away with competition and substituted mutual understanding, interest and helpfulness.

During the writing of their skits, the committees questioned the fitness of some of their information for play purposes. It was decided that following each report there would be time for evaluation of the committee's work by the whole class. At this time any additional information would be added and all questions answered. It was noticeable during the evaluations that suggestions for improvement and responses to these suggestions were given with a great spirit of interest and sincerity.

This method of giving committee reports is, of course, only one procedure and cannot be assumed to answer the problem of successful committee reporting. But with guidance that is not teacher imposed and an encouragement of the interest children exhibit, committee reports can be made productive and creatively interesting.

### *Culminating Activity Grows from Committee Reports*

Out of one creative activity ideas come that can be enlarged upon and extended to the degree that new creative endeavors are made possible. After completing their committee reports, the children were quite eager to assemble the reports into a "major production." A few of the children had seen plays given by the college and wanted to know how much time it would take to do something similar. They were quite willing to accept the fact that very likely they would have to be satisfied with a production somewhat smaller than those seen at the college.

For a first step, the children and teacher examined some three and four-act plays that were found in the library and in various homes. During the discussions that followed, essential parts that seemed to be included in each of the plays read were evaluated and explained with the help of the teacher. At this time questions such as the following were asked by the children:

If we use the skits written for our committee reports can we put them all together? Should this production have a story to tell the people who see it? Should there be music and dancing in our play? What kind of scenery will we need? How long should we make the play?

As a beginning the teacher suggested that the plays given earlier be collected and a committee chosen from the group to look them over in search of ideas that would help make the play one story. One person from each of the research committees was chosen to help go over the material and work out an idea for a plot.

The committee reported that after looking over the plays one idea used in a

potato-puppet play seemed most desirable. This called for a "Professor" who had developed a "time machine" and who, while watching it, went to sleep and dreamed he was living with prehistoric people. This, the committee reported, would not only make a good story, but would provide room for all of the original information given earlier in the committee reports. The group unanimously accepted this proposal and gave the committee permission to write the play and submit each act to the class for changes and acceptance. One stipulation the writing committee worked under was that each member of the class must have a speaking part. "I don't think we should write down exactly what we are to say because when we did the play for the committee report it was easier for me if I could use my own words," said one. "I always get scared I'll forget my lines and this way I can always think of something to say," said another.

While a committee worked on writing the "production" another group started sketching ideas for the scenery. After having in mind approximately what they wanted, the children asked the art consultant's advice on how to carry out their ideas. The art teacher showed the advantages of actually making flats and how they could be constructed and used. Also, he advised that as many dimensional objects such as caves and entrances be made as possible. He suggested painting a first coat on the scenery surface and then painting on scenery as they needed it. Also, the art teacher consented to come down as often as the children wished to give suggestions and answer their questions.

*Making the Scenery.* At the com-

pletion of the plans for writing the play and making the scenery, all hands began working on the scenery. Plans were drawn with the dimensions for necessary lumber. Before a committee purchased supplies, the number of board feet necessary to build six flats, each four feet wide and ten feet high, and to build a cave large enough to walk into were computed and the actual cost obtained from the lumber yard. Previous to this, the actual size of the stage had been measured so that every inch might be used for scenery and properties.

The girls were particularly interested in measuring and building flats. Their efforts with saws, hammer, nails and rules at first did not satisfy them, but actual practice proved more beneficial than any of the demonstrations by the teacher. Practical problems such as the following had to be solved in building the flats:

The flats are to be four feet wide at the top and bottom and ten feet high. The boards at the top, bottom and middle must be sawed to fit inside the boards that make up sides of the flats.

If boards  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide are used for the sides, how long must the boards be that held together the top, bottom and middle?

Before thinking of the above problem, the children sawed the boards used for the width of the flat four feet in length, and when placed in between the ten foot board they pushed them out until the flat measured four feet-seven inches wide. The problem then became one of finding the necessary length to saw the boards so the overall width of the flat would be just four feet. This is just one of the many practical problems that resulted in the construction of the scenery. Of particular note during the construction of the scenery, was the lack of any definite division of labor. Boys

were just as eager to paint scenery as to construct flats and likewise, girls enjoyed driving and bending nails in building the flats and the cave.

Muslin seemed the best material with which to cover the flats; however, due to the expense involved, mural paper was substituted, although precaution had to be used in moving the flats to avoid tearing. Hinges to hold the flats in place made them easy to fold for storage and transportation purposes.

In two weeks time a cave resembling stone and the flats were completed. The flats were made to resemble a prehistoric forest. Jutting out from the forest was a cliff wall and placed against the cliff wall was the cave constructed from wood, wire, netting and paper.

*Rehearsals Begin.* During and after the construction of the scenery a short period each afternoon was set aside for rehearsals. The children decided to call the production "Professor Tatter's Dream" and took over the direction themselves, asking the teacher to sum up his criticisms at the end of each rehearsal. As was decided earlier, each child had a speaking part although the committee that assembled the reports into a play only wrote suggestive lines to give the actors ideas.

As rehearsals continued the need for properties such as clay bowls, crude spears and hatches and finally, costumes arose. Various ideas with regard to costuming were discussed and it was quite some time before any agreement could be reached. One boy remarked that burlap bags might be obtained at his father's farmer supply store. He brought one to school and

showed how, when armholes and a hole for the head were cut and the top of the bag made ragged in a few places, the bag could be pulled over his head to make a most satisfactory animal skin costume. If we were willing to take bags with holes chewed by ambitious rodents in search of grain we could get them free. Needless to say, this met with hearty approval, but even when washed and worn inside out several well known feed companies got some excellent free advertisement.

Putting the finishing touches on the play involved meeting with the music supervisor and creating a series of dance steps that could be led by drums made from nail kegs and covered with rubber innertubing. These the children worked out with appropriate chanting, and when added to the play made a touch of realism the children enjoyed.

Quite briefly, it was the wish of the children and the teacher for the play to show first, some of the important information they had discovered concerning man's beginnings; second, to make the information they had gathered exciting and interesting to those who would see it; and third, to point out in an interesting way the similarities and differences in the way people have existed over the centuries by placing a twentieth century professor in early man's environment. His adventures with the cave people enabled him to experience their way of life and to apply some of his knowledge to their living. In several instances, dire consequences and amusing experiences resulted. In the end the Professor was quite happy to wake up in his laboratory, but felt refreshed with his knowledge of the past.

As the day approached for the play to be given for the other classes, the children became somewhat doubtful whether or not they had perfected the play to the extent that a "good" performance could be assured. "Every time we rehearse it I think it gets better because everyone says something different than they said before," said one child.

However, the time was set and "opening day jitters" plus all the complications that go with a first performance were experienced. The first performance ended with great excitement, as everyone knows who has seen youngsters put on a program.

By the time the parents saw the play, the children felt they were "old timers", but for an adult audience the children especially wanted to do their best. Therefore, the anticipation equaled that of the first performance. When the play was given for the last time each child regretfully put aside his scratchy old burlap bag and a wonderful time was had by the children and teacher reminiscing about the play "we" wrote. To the author it seemed significant that the children referred to the play "written" rather than to the play "put on".

#### *Of What Value?*

What does helping children write a play such as this do, considering the time it takes both from reading, writing and arithmetic and from children's free time on Saturday's and after school, that cannot be done by sending away for a professionally written play with costumes "creatively" described and scenery plainly drawn?

The very fact that the children willingly gave their time after school and on Sat-

urdays shows that for a time at least to those children school became not a place they go to work for six hours five days a week, but a place where actual living takes place—a place where hours are less important than experiencing satisfaction in the doing of something of their own for the enjoyment of others. School should be a place where teachers guide children in the creation of experiences that are vital and interesting in each area of the curriculum.

Many of the activities that followed continued to bring out and extend learnings begun while writing the play. A whole unit on measurement in arithmetic and a series of short plays using original ideas stemmed from this experience. Previous to "Professor Tatter's Dream" the group had been responsible for their own music programs, three time each week. Youngsters who before had been quite reluctant when asked to take part were now very interested in participating.

From the standpoint of the teacher who, after all, had to be an enthusiastic and active guide throughout the whole

undertaking, this type of experience was well worth the time and energy given. It gave the teacher an opportunity to observe how dramatization can and does meet the needs of children. It was possible for each child to step out of his everyday role and free himself of limitations and inhibitions in carrying out a particular part as he feels it should be done.

Finally, the carrying through of ideas to their fruition by working together in a give and take situation for the benefit of others, with an ultimate goal of creating something all enjoy involves one of the fundamental concepts of democratic living.

A child who has developed vital creative interests is rarely a child who carries on antisocial activities or who gets into trouble for lack of guidance. More school and community effort in building wholesome, constructively valuable interests would cut down materially on juvenile delinquency and minimize the possibility of mental breakdown as well as the lifetime values in attitudes, habits, and real mental power.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Strickland, Ruth G. *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1951. p. 338.

## *Dramatic Play From Books*

EDITH EDMONDS<sup>1</sup>

Teachers and librarians are always on the search for story material that will offer appealing interest to be shared with the rest of the school. Such a story must have qualities of plot and character as to lend itself to successful dramatic play. A chosen story should offer appeal for a variety of ages such as would be present for an all-

school assembly. Also, the story must be within the realms of possibility from the angle of costume and scenery. Imagination and productive creativity should be challenged—and leave it to a group of children to figure out an original and colorful

<sup>1</sup>Elementary School Librarian, Winnetka, Ill. Public Schools.

interpretation of a tale that has captured their fancy. This dramatic play, starting in the classroom, makes books come to life and is a very real way to help bring children and books together for a happy, satisfying experience.

Following are some suggested books which offer great possibilities in the field of dramatic play. These stories would have appeal for a school audience of grades one through six. Many an older group has enjoyed producing some of the fairy and folk tales that were their favorites when they were younger. This may be a starter list to which teachers may want to add stories their groups have produced successfully. These books are to be found in most school and public libraries.

*Fantasy in Action:*

- |          |                                                                                                   |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adshead  | Brownies, Hush. Oxford.<br>(Nice for a primary group)                                             |
| Atwater  | Mr. Popper's Penguins.<br>Little. (A real favorite)                                               |
| Blanck   | Jonathan and the Rainbow. Houghton. (A lively pirate tale of how a stolen rainbow is found)       |
| Blanck   | The King and the Noble Blacksmith. Houghton. (Humorous story of a king who wanted to go fishing.) |
| Browning | The Pied Piper of Hamelin. Warne.                                                                 |
| Carroll  | Alice in Wonderland. Several publishers have good editions of this story.                         |

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | The Poppy Seed Cakes. Doubleday. (Truly an old favorite)                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Arabian Nights                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp. Also, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. Scribner.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Daugherty                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Andy and the Lion. MacMillan. (Humorous adaptation of an old fable)                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Dawson                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Magic Firecrackers. Viking. (A very amusing tale of a boy, firecrackers, and some Chinese)                                                                                                                                          |
| Flack                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Walter, the Lazy Mouse. Doubleday. (Lots of fun!)                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Grahame                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Wind in the Willows. Scribner.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Grimm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Some of these fairy tales are good to give: Bremen Town Musicians; The Golden Goose; Hansel and Gretel; Jack and the Bean Stalk; Rumpelstiltskin; Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs; Elves and the Shoemaker; and Cinderella. Coward. |
| <p><i>Note:</i> A new touch may be added to the playing of these old fairy tales by working in with the narrative simple group dances, partly telling the story, or entirely telling the story through pantomime. Choric speaking as a background to action will add to narrative.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Jordan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | "I Won't," Said the King. Knopf.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Kipling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Just So Stories. Doubleday.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

	(Two or three may be given, offering humor and action with the color of costuming as the animals.)	Seuss	500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins. Vanguard.
		Seuss	The King's Stilts. Random.
Kiviat	Paji. McGraw. (A Colorful story of an east Indian boy who tires of carving elephants.)	Thurber	The Great Quillow. Harcourt. (An old favorite)
		Thurber	Many Moons. Harcourt. (Something different)
Lawson	Dragon John. Viking. (A good fairy tale with action)	Travers	The Mary Poppins Stories. Reynal.
Leaf	Story of Ferdinand. Viking. (Again dances, singing, and pantomime will help to present this favorite tale in a new way.)	Wolo	Secret of the Ancient Oak. Morrow. (Fun to produce)
		<i>The More Realistic in Action:</i> (backgrounds historic, modern, serious, or humorous)	
Lofting	Most of the Dr. Dolittle stories. Stokes.	Alden	Knight of the Silver Shield. From the book, Why the Chimes Rang. Bobbs.
Lorenzini	Story of Pinocchio. MacMillan.		
MacGregor	Miss Pickerell Goes to Mars. McGraw. (Very modern)	Buff	The Apple and the Arrow. Houghton. (William Tell)
McDonald	Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle Stories. Lippincott.	Burnett	The Secret Garden. Stokes. (An old favorite)
Mother Goose	Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater (A wonderful dramatic play experience can be had by adding to the simple plot of the jingle characters, costume, dancing, and singing. Older children will like to do this for the younger ones. They will like to make a huge pumpkin house which afterwards they may want to give to the kindergarten.)	Estes	The Hundred Dresses. Harcourt. (Good for girls to give)
		Gilbert	Imps and Angels. Dutton. (Tale of the Middle Ages)
		Grey	Adam of the Road. Viking. (A scene or two from this might be good for a 6th grade to do.)
		Henry	Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalkin. Bobbs. (Humorous tale of the artist's boyhood.)

Hewes	Spice and the Devil's Cave. Knopf. (Exciting tale of spice trade in the Middle Ages.)	Stein	Gabriel and the Hour Book. Doubleday. (Middle Ages)
Kent	He Went With Marco Polo. Houghton. (Scenes from this tale would be good for a 6th grade to work out.)	Stevenson	Scenes from Treasure Island. Scribner.
Kohler	Daniel in the cub Scout Den. Aladdin.	Twain	Tom Sawyer. Harper. (What an interesting idea it would be to bring Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Homer Price together!)
Lawson	Ben and Me. Little. (Certain scenes from this story of Ben Franklin might be fun to do.)	<i>Story and Play collections which offer further suggestions:</i>	
Lenski	Blue Ridge Billy. Lippincott. (Southern Mountain tale)	Fenner	Princesses and Peasant Boys. Knopf.
Lenski	Judy's Journey. Lippincott. (Tales of a migrant family)	Gruenberg	More Favorite Stories Old and New. Doubleday.
LeGrand	Agustus and the River. Bobbs. (Humorous tale about a boy.)	Smith	Just For Fun. Lothrop. ("Play of St. George and the Dragon" p. 267. Also, from the book by Grahame, THE RELUCTANT DRAGON, A group could have a wonderful time producing this humorous view of this famous legend.)
McCloskey	Scenes from Homer Price. Viking.	<i>Note: Dramatic play from the books listed in this bibliography should be for classroom and school assembly enjoyment. Dramatic productions for other public presentations should be first cleared by getting permission from the publishers.</i>	
Pyle	Robin Hood Stories. Scribner. (Adults may tire of these tales, but the children don't.)		
Seredy	Scenes from The Good Master. Viking. (This story offers action, humor, peasant dances, music, and costume)		
Slobodkin	Bixxy and the Secret Message. MacMillan. (Tale of Cub Scouts)		

# What Seven-Year-Olds Like In Books

AGNES G. GUNDERSON<sup>1</sup>

The literature program for the seven-year-olds in our school includes the sharing of many books and stories. Having read these books to several groups of second graders over a period of years, one becomes accustomed to hearing such comments as: "I like Dr. Dolittle the best of any story I have heard. Will you please read it again?" "Oh Boy, this is a good story! (*Elephant's Child*) I have heard it many times but I like to hear it again;" "Are there any more books about Mr. Popper's Penguins?" "Will you read *Princess on the Glass Hill*?" "Miss Wood has her green beads on—will you read the poem<sup>2</sup> about the green glass beads?" "I wish we had another book about Stuart Little." When teacher had read about halfway through the book, *Mister Penny*, a child was heard to say, "I hope it will turn out all right."

It is the belief of the writer that a teacher can more wisely and effectively guide children in their reading if she knows what are the particular qualities in books which appeal to children at different age levels. A study was made in Grade Two of the University Elementary School in an effort to determine what those qualities are by finding out how seven-year-olds react to certain books and stories.

Some children testify to the truth of the following statement: "Sometimes the best way to react to a story is just to sit and think how good it was,"<sup>3</sup> by doing just that. Others like to discuss the book and the characters in it. Among the books and stories read to this group of twenty-one children, the twelve books used in this study were selected by the teacher for discussion. The usual response at the conclusion

of a story or book read to these second graders is "I like that book," "That was a good story!"

In an attempt to discover the reasons for such liking, or which qualities in the book were especially liked, the teacher asked, "Why do you like it?" The most frequent responses were, "It's funny," "It's interesting," "It's exciting," "It's scary," "It's magic."

To encourage children to analyze their reactions further, the teacher asked such questions as, "Why do you think it is funny?" "What do you mean by 'funny'?" What are the scary things in this book?" "Why is it exciting?" "Why is it magic?" In response the children made such comments as, "I liked when Mary Poppins got laughing gas and went up in the air," "It was exciting when the Elephant's Child stepped on the crocodile;" "Dr. Dolittle is interesting because he had so many adventures;" "I like scary stories like when Bartholomew Cubbins was to be pushed off the high tower;" "I liked the part where Maia walked up into the sky like there were invisible steps—that's magic."

During the discussion of the different books following the reading of them to the group, the teacher jotted down the comments given by the various children. Only as long as comments were made spontaneously and rapidly was this discussion carried on. No attempt was made to exhaust *all* the factors that might account for the popularity of the book. The teacher deliberately refrained from asking the children, e. g., to think of *all* the reasons why they liked the book, as this might encourage them to give superficial reasons.

All comments are direct quotations—the child's own words as he gave them in the discussion—and show his evaluation of or reaction to the book. Some are in complete sentences, and many are mere phrases, which is a natural

<sup>1</sup>University of Wyoming

<sup>2</sup>"Overheard on a Saltmarsh," by Harold Monro.

<sup>3</sup>Dora V. Smith, "Literature and Personal Reading," *National Society for the Study of Education*, 48th yearbook, part 2, 1949, p. 214.

way for young children to talk when discussing or conversing on a topic. The following comments given on two of the books are illustrative.

Comments on the book, *The Story of Dr. Dolittle*, which is a perennial favorite of seven-year-olds, are as follows:

1. (Adventure)
  - "I liked it because Dr. Dolittle had so many adventures."
  - "He went to Africa to cure the sick monkeys."
  - "He was chased by pirates."
2. (Excitement)
  - "It was so exciting."
  - "The soldiers chased Dr. Dolittle and his animals."
  - "Dr. Dolittle and his animals were put in jail."
  - "The sharks go after the pirates."
  - "Dr. Dolittle talks to sharks and to pirates."
  - "Dr. Dolittle got away in the pirates' ship."
3. (Humor)
  - "I like it because it is so funny."
  - "Polynesia (Parrot) got Dr. Dolittle and his animals out of jail."
  - "Polynesia frightens the king of Jolliginki—she tells him she can give him mumps just by raising her little finger."
4. (Accomplishments)
  - "I like it because Dr. Dolittle can do so many things."
  - "Dr. Dolittle is a good doctor."
  - "He can cure all the sick animals."
  - "He could tell what the animals need—spectacles for the horse."
  - "He could talk the animals' language."
  - "Dr. Dolittle always got out of any trouble he got into."
5. (Justice)
  - "I liked it because the pirates couldn't catch Dr. Dolittle."
  - "Dr. Dolittle got away in the pirates' ship."
  - "He made the pirates be farmers."
6. (Personality of Leading Character)
  - "I liked it because Dr. Dolittle was kind."
  - "He was funny, friendly, jolly."
  - "He always got into funny things."

*Rabbit Hill* is another favorite. The reasons given for its popularity are:

1. (Kindness to animals)
  - "I liked the book because the people in it were kind to animals."

"Folks helped Georgie (Rabbit) when he was hurt."

"Folks put out food for animals."

Folks helped Georgie (Rabbit) when he was hurt."

"Folks put out sign, 'Drive Slow'."

"Folks didn't let man put out poison."

2. (Humor)

"I liked the book because it is funny."

"It was funny when the rabbit kicked that cat in the stomach."

"Uncle Analda's house was disorderly—I could keep house better than he could."

"Mother Rabbit worried all the time—Silly to worry all the time."

3. (Frightening or scary incidents)

"I liked the book because it is exciting."

"It was exciting when the old hound chased Georgie."

"It is scary—I liked where Mother was afraid Georgie had been put in the dungeon."

4. (Adventure)

"I liked it because Georgie had so many exciting adventures."

5. (Accomplishments)

"I liked the songs that the rabbit made up."

"I liked Georgie—he jumped Dean Man's Brook."

6. (Satisfaction)

"I liked *Rabbit Hill* because new folks finally came and they were planting folks, so the rabbits got food."

"I liked the book because it is funny," was the reason most frequently given for liking these books. As the comments indicate, children use the term "funny" in a broad sense. They use it to indicate:

(a) The *ridiculous*

"The pelican flew right over the statue of liberty and didn't even see it—the statue of liberty is about two miles high."

Funny—had to call the policeman to get Honk (moose) out of the livery stable."

"It's funny—pig not sick, but Mister Penny gave the pig medicine anyway."

"It was funny when the pig snored—I never heard a pig snore."

It was funny—cat dancing with a fish—imagine a cat dancing with a fish."

(b) The *unbelievable*

"Mary Poppins slid up the bannister."

- "The wind carried Mary Poppins up over the trees."  
 "It is funny to have a mouse in the family."  
 "It is funny for a mouse to make poems."
- (c) *The surprising*  
 "Every time Bartholomew took off his hat another hat was on his head."  
 "The parrot got Dr. Dolittle and the animals out of jail."
- (d) *The imaginative*  
 "Magic bottle—different kinds of medicine in the same bottle."  
 "Everyone got laughing gas—table went up in the air—had a tea party up in the air."
- (e) *The absurd*  
 "The king was so angry that the wheels of the carriage shook."  
 "It's funny that Honk could eat a ton of hay; I have never seen anything that could eat so much hay."
- (f) *Other humorous situations*  
 "It was funny when the fat lady slipped on a banana peel."  
 "I liked the book about the pelicans—it was funny when the babies ate fish out of the pelican's mouth."  
 "It was funny when the pig got stuck in the hole in the fence."

Strickland<sup>4</sup> bears out this same tendency regarding the young child's humor:

"The sense of humor of primary children is crude and objective. The child laughs at what he sees and hears; anything amuses him so long as it calls attention—sudden falls, comic faces, and dramatic situations."

*Excitement, suspense, and frightening or scary incidents* are other reasons given for liking books, as seen in these comments: "I liked *The Elephant's Child* because it is exciting, like when the Elephant's Child stepped on the crocodile;" "It is scary—you don't know what might happen—crocodile might eat him," "I liked the part about Mary Poppins in the zoo—that was exciting."

A satisfactory ending, or the justice of the folktale—kindness rewarded, evil punished—

<sup>4</sup>Ruth G. Strickland, *Guide for Teaching "English is Our Language, Grades I and II"*, D. C. Heath, 1950, p. 13.

are standards demanded by the young child as seen by these remarks: "I liked when the Elephant's Child spanked his relatives who had spanked him;" "The rooster's tail came off—served him right;" "It turned out a happy story because Mister Penny got rich;" "I liked *Wait for William* because William got a ride on the elephant; the big children were not kind to him, but he was the only one who got a ride on the elephant;" "I like the ending because Peter Churchmouse finally got cheese."

One factor only was singled out for specific attention—that of vocabulary. The teacher asked "Were there any interesting words, or words that you particularly liked in this book?" Here also, only those comments that the children gave quickly and spontaneously were included. It is interesting to note the seven-year-olds' appreciation of Kipling's colorful words in the story, *The Elephant's Child*. The following quotations are particularly liked: "Satiabable Curtiosity; O Best Beloved; Kolokolo Bird; Great grey-green-greasy Limpopo River all set about with Fever Trees; Scalesome, flailsome tail; Bi-coloured-python-rock-snake; Armor-plated upper deck." Other words or quotations liked in these books were: "You stupid piece of warm bacon," (from *Dr. Dolittle*), "Well, I'm jig-sawed to a puzzle," (from *Mister Penny*), "Well, I'll be frost-bitten," (from *Honk, The Moose*). Also refrains occurring again and again, such as: "New folks coming, Oh My! Oh My!" (from *Rabbit Hill*), "Fuss, fuss, fuss," from *Peter Churchmouse*.

Illustrations were sometimes given as reasons for liking the books. *The Little House*, a Caldecott Award Book, was chosen for discussion in order to get the children's reaction to a book distinguished for its illustrations rather than content. Their comments, "I like the book because it has such beautiful pictures. There are many pretty colors—in fall rusty brown, and in winter white snow," "The pond against the green trees and grass is pretty," show that seven-year-olds are sensitive to beautiful colors. Their

concern about what happens to the house is seen here: "The house is sad because it cannot see stars—no grass now, no trees;" "The house was happy at last because it was moved back into the country;" "Hooray! It was moved out of the city!" Their feeling of relief when it was finally moved back into the country shows how they endowed it with the human emotion of happiness. Close observation and attention to details in illustrations is revealed in the comment: "Little Georgie looks like Robbut." When teacher told them that the same artist (Robert Lawson) had illustrated both *Robbut* and *Rabbit Hill* it seemed to them natural that they should look alike.

The discussion or evaluation of the various books reveal many items of interest. It is interesting to note that the group preferred *Rabbit Hill*, which is one of the Newbery Award Books and written for older children, to *Robbut*, another book about rabbits by the same author but classified for younger children. The humor in *Stuart Little* is also on a higher age level than that of *Peter Churchmouse* (main character in both books is a mouse) but as the comment, "Stuart Little is smarter than Peter Churchmouse," indicates, seven-year-olds can appreciate it. This group distinctly did as Hazard<sup>5</sup> suggests, "Let us revel in nonsense."

Some people feel that young children should not be exposed to any gruesome or frightening details in books. This group of seven-year-olds found nothing too frightening in these books—on the contrary, they liked certain books *because* they are "scary", as when Bartholomew's head<sup>6</sup> Paul Hazard, *Books, Children, and Men*, The Horn Book Inc., 1944, p. 137. was to be chopped off or when Elephant's Child stepped on the crocodile.

In summarizing these comments through which children reveal their reasons for liking these books, the qualities that seem to account for their popularity are: humor, excitement, suspense, adventure, kindness to animals, an element of magic or fancy, a leading character able

to accomplish the unusual or unexpected, and an ending in which justice triumphs.

As we select books for children, younger as well as older, let us keep in mind Robert Lawson's<sup>6</sup> advice:

"We must not give them (children) just a splendid or an intriguing Juvenile List. We must give them *books*—books that will become tattered and grimy from use, not books too handsome to grovel with. Books that will make them weep, books that will rack them with hearty laughter. Books that absorb them so they have to be shaken loose from them. Books that they will put under their pillows at night. Books that give them gooseflesh and glimpses of glory."

#### *Books Used in This Study*

1. *Story of Doctor Dolittle* by Hugh Lofting, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. 1920.
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<sup>6</sup>Robert Lawson, *Hornbook Magazine*, 17:283, July 1941.

# *Interrelationships of the Language Arts and Personality*

DAVID H. RUSSELL<sup>1</sup>

Language is a form of behavior so closely related to mental and social development that it should be intimately related to personality. Other articles in this series indicate the close relationships between various forms of language behavior and other developmental characteristics and environmental conditions. The review of some two hundred fifty references in preparation for this article indicates that although language activities and personality are theoretically close, research evidence about their relationships is frequently spotty and vague. Certain topics such as interrelationships of language arts difficulties and personality difficulties have been rather thoroughly explored. Other areas, such as the positive contribution of language abilities to personality development or the relationships between certain types of personality and different forms of language activity, have been relatively untouched.

## *Previous Summaries*

Some mention of work on interrelationships of language and personality is made in the two comprehensive summaries of McCarthy (91, 92) on child development in language. Witty (165, 166, 167) has three articles summarizing work on the relationships between reading and emotions or adjustment factors. In a chapter entitled "The Relations of Language and Speech Acquisitions to Personality Development" LaBrant (84) has a number of wise suggestions to teachers for broadening the usual language arts program, but little research evidence to quote. Anyone interested in the topic should read her discussion of the growth of language behavior, language as an outlet for creative urges, and influences of literature upon adolescents. LaBrant points out that, by the time the child comes to school, his language behavior is

already so organized that it is hard for the teacher to recognize its psychological significance. She points out, also, that schools are largely concerned with the child's knowledge of external language materials, printed and written, and the degree to which he conforms to conventional language patterns. Other summaries of previous research are of a more specialized nature and will be mentioned in appropriate sections below.

A survey of available references leads to the conclusion that the dearth of specific evidence about interrelationships of language behaviors and personality is due, not to lack of knowledge about language development, but to lack of success in defining and measuring personality, particularly in the elementary school and secondary school age range. As a result of two analyses of available personality questionnaires, one including a 360-item bibliography, Ellis (35, 36) concludes that personality questionnaires are of questionable value in group diagnosis of individual adjustment or personality traits. Other difficulties in personality measurement have been pointed out by Goodenough (52), Gough (55), McShea (95), Sullivan (144), Traxler (151) and others. The newer projective and sociometric approaches to personality measurement have been described, and in some cases tried with school children, by Bonney (16), Frank (42), Havighurst (65), Inkeles (74), Kuhlen (82), Sargent (126) and Symonds (145). Such methods offer promise of better methods of personality measurement of preschool and school children and youth.

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, University of California, Berkeley. The bibliographical work for this study was aided by a grant from the Faculty Research Fund of the Department of Education, University of California.

When current problems have been studied more thoroughly, such as that of the examiner confusing his own projections with those of the child, more complete analyses of the interrelationships of personality and language behaviors can be made. The current scarcity of adequate personality measures seems to be one important cause of the paucity of specific evidence about the interrelationships of language and personality.

Although the term *personality* is sometimes in doubt, a search of the literature reveals considerable evidence about the relationships between personality and achievement in general, including language achievements. Many studies of the interrelationships of personality and reading achievements have also been made. These and related topics are considered below.

### *Personality and General Academic Achievements*

Investigators have frequently been interested in reasons for school success and failure and in emotional and personality influences upon achievement, including language achievements. General discussions of emotional and social behavior in relation to learning have been presented by Anderson (5) and by Jones, Conrad and Murphy (78). A number of texts in educational psychology, such as that of Pressey and Robinson (112) differentiate between the effects of mild emotion and strong emotional frustration upon learning. Later research on school achievements and personality has been summarized by Tuddenham (152) and by Seagoe and Cooper (128). A good historical introduction to the topic is presented by Wolf (169), who summarizes forty-two studies (and mentions eighty-one in her bibliography) of the relationships of personality to success or failure in school work. The first study mentioned is one by S. L. Pressey on the relation of character traits to success in school, published in 1920. Most of the studies reviewed involved subjects at the college level and non-standardized ratings

of personality were frequent. Many of the studies involved cases where there was a disparity between intelligence records and academic achievement and a number suggest that anxiety states and other emotional disturbances may affect both intelligence scores and achievement scores. In another study of two matched groups of girls at the sixth grade level Wolf (168) 1947, found that six of seven personality tests showed differences favoring the good achievers in various school subjects.

Later studies of factors other than intelligence which affect school success in language and other areas are those of Tyler (154), Gerberich (48) and Owens and Johnson (107). Early disparity studies include those of Laird (85) and Stone (141). Other studies of personality factors in learning and achievement are those of Bird (13), of Keys and Whiteside (79), of Stagner (139), of Murphy and Ladd (103) and of Gough (56). Rorschach responses of successful and unsuccessful students have been studied by Margulies (96) and Osborne and Sanders (105). Failures of gifted pupils were studied by Van Alstyne (155), Conklin (26), and Cohler (24) and the educational achievements of "problem children" by Paynter and Blanchard (109). Some recent articles on personality and learning by McCarthy, Hildreth and others have been collected in an American Council on Education publication (4).

The common finding of many of these studies that personality affects learning and achievement has been questioned by Rosen (117) who found no difference between children diagnosed as neurotic and as normal and by Thurstone (150) who feels that "too much attention has probably been given . . . to personality adjustment in the reading problem" and that more attention could profitably be given to problems of perception. In a somewhat more detailed study Hendrickson and Huskey (69) found that at the sixth grade level, extroversion is positively related to achievement and nega-

tively to intelligence for boys and practically unrelated to those factors in the case of girls.

The studies on interrelationships of personality and general academic achievements, including language abilities, leave the reader with a feeling that satisfactory data have still to be uncovered. There is little doubt that strong emotions and more permanent maladjustments may interfere with learning and achievement in many cases but specific evidence of relationships is lacking. Difficulties in personality measurement have contributed to the uncertainty of the findings. Somewhat more satisfactory answers have been achieved in the more specific studies of the interrelationships of personality difficulties and reading difficulties which are reviewed two sections below.

### *Personality and Language*

Language and personality have been associated by many writers, with varying amounts of supporting research evidence. In her text Strickland (143) says, "The language of an individual is in a very real sense the mirror of his personality. . . . The spontaneity, fluency and control he shows in his speech indicate quite clearly how well his growth is progressing." The child who acquires language easily usually makes social adjustments easily. Some writers support the stereotype that a person's personality can be judged by his voice—the soft, quiet voice indicates a shy person, etc. There is little evidence against hypotheses such as these but there is also little or no general evidence showing the exact relationships suggested. Some of the available studies in speech and in written language are mentioned below.

The standard reference to speech education, Thonssen and Fatherson's *Bibliography of Speech Education* and its supplement (147), (148) is a good source for articles and books on speech and personality. For example, the supplement covering 1939 to 1948 lists some thirty theses and fifty articles on the topic. Most of these, however, are concerned with adults

and with formal aspects of speech. The other indispensable reference is Sanford's review (125) of over one hundred books and articles in the field. Sanford believes the two main developments in the study of speech are a movement toward a quantitative description of linguistic phenomena and a study of the functional relation between language and nonlinguistic behavior. In regard to the second he says, "Man, the sign-using animal, makes many of his adjustments by devices purely linguistic, and his intellectual functions are in large part dependent upon words. If we set up the hypothesis that a study of the individual's verbal behavior will disclose a facet of his personality, it appears unlikely that we are weaving a rope entirely of sand." (125: 814) He concludes that much work needs to be done in exploring relationships between speech and personality but that "there are many indications that language is a vehicle of personality as well as thought."

More specifically, in the young child language is closely related to socialization. It should be noted that the young child's oral language becomes effective about two years of age but that true co-operative play does not usually appear until four or five years of age. Major adjustments in the child's life may affect his language development. There is some evidence that learning to walk delays the appearance of first words and adjusting to school in the first year or two may slow down rate of vocabulary growth (28). Spriestersbach and Buck (138) suggest that speech development involves (1) speech sound development (2) speech fluency (3) language development and (4) voice. They and other writers warn that defective articulation (by adult standards) is normal for the three or four-year-old and that hesitations and rhythmic difficulties may occur normally in children's speech for years thereafter. The causation of stuttering is still in dispute. Johnson (77: 178) states that "the most defensible general conclusion to be drawn from this research, to date, would seem to be that stuttering

is a specific form of learned anxiety-motivated behavior." Richardson (114) found few differences between adult stutterers and non-stutterers on the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Tests and Ainsworth (3) stresses the theory of multiple causation and "widely variant causes" of stuttering. Hahn (61) has shown that the content and form of children's speech must be related to the social setting in which it takes place.

A considerable number of studies of college students, such as those of Gilkinson (49, 50), of Cantril (21), Dunkel (34), and Duncan (33) have shown some relationship between personality test scores and certain aspects of speech, especially quality. However, as Spriestersbach and Buck (138) suggest, in associating voice and personality listeners are usually only declaring their own stereotypes and personality estimates on voice alone seem to be little better than estimates of intelligence based on facial expression.

The established relationships between children's writing and their personalities are also meager. That spelling difficulties may be related to emotional difficulties has been suggested by Schonell (127), by Russell (118), and by Spache (137). That graphology is not entirely a fake has been suggested by Victor (158) and others. But probably the most fruitful approach to the study of language and personality is now being started through analysis of the content of children's oral and written language.

Older studies of children's conversation such as those of Zyve (171) and Dawson (30) were content to analyze the child's written materials in terms of favorite topics at various grade levels. If the normative topics, such as those found by Dawson (games and sports, personal experiences, trips, pets, family and friends, etc.) were compared to one individual's conversation some clues as to his personality could possibly be derived. Similarly, early anal-

yses of children's writing such as those of Fitzgerald (40) and Bellows (10) could be carried to the place where they shed some light on personality. A beginning on this type of study has been made by Leary (88) and by Caldwell and Swenson (20). Cole (25) and Burrows (19) both suggest some of the diagnostic and therapeutic values of children's creative writing.

A discussion of personality and language would be incomplete without mention of the pioneer in the field. The classical studies of Piaget, especially his early works (110, 111) stress the relationship between a child's language and his social development. Piaget stresses the "prelogical" and "egocentric" nature of the child's language before seven or eight years of age and the social nature of his language and concepts after eleven or twelve years. A number of investigators in the United States such as Abel (1), Deutsche (32), Huang and Lee (72) and McCarthy (92), have questioned some of Piaget's specific findings in regard to animism and causality but not his general hypothesis of close relationships between language and social development. McCarthy points out the importance of the situation in which language is recorded. Most of Piaget's later work, not all of which is available in English translation, has been concerned with children's concepts rather than specific aspects of personality.

### *Personality and Reading*

The continued interest in the study of reading, almost an undue emphasis compared to what has been done in oral language and listening, means that many more research results are available connecting personality with reading than with any other language art. There are in the literature known to the writer approximately a hundred references to interrelationships of reading difficulties and emotional difficulties alone. The present summary mentions only some of the more important references, divided as follows: (a) studies of general relationships between reading and personality

(b) studies of interrelationships of reading difficulties and personality disturbances, (c) studies of positive values of reading and literature.

a. *Reading and Personality: General Relationships*

Gray (59) and his co-authors have suggested many ways in which reading may contribute to social and personal development. Havighurst (64), and the Shaftels (129, 130) related reading to the "developmental tasks" of childhood and adolescence, the latter using a sociodrama technique. Goodykoontz (54) and Horn (71) have given general suggestions for language arts and reading programs stressing child development. Auerbach (7) and Russell (120) have suggested conditions which must be met before reading can influence personality effectively. The Franks (43), Daniel and Hinds (29), Husband (73) and Russell (121) have all emphasized the importance of the process of identification if reading is to influence personality adjustments. Bossard (17) and Russell (124) have suggested that teachers be aware of culturally induced problems if they are to help personality adjustment through reading.

The relationship of reading interests to personality offers many opportunities for research. Cottle (27) has shown that interest scores are related to personality scores at the adult level. In a study of Scottish children using a pictures test, a poem test, books and films preferred, a story completion test and other language activities Foulds (41) concluded that a child's "fictional choices are predictable, since they cohere with other observable characteristics of his personality." In an intensive study of two sixth grade classes in California Reed (113) used such measures as an interest inventory, lists of books read, Mental Health Analysis, sociometric scores and reading achievements. He found that the top quarter of the group on the Mental Health Analysis were three times as accurate as the lowest quarter when their stated reading preferences were compared to

their actual reading. At this level both high and low quartiles on a combination of personality measures read animal and adventure stories but the low group read more on family life and sports. The hypothesis suggested was that this group read more in these areas for feelings of security and achievement. The correlation between amount of comic books read and popularity (measured sociometrically) was .80. In a larger study of sixth grade pupils Mitchell (100) reported relationships between reading ability, social acceptability, intelligence and general school achievement. She concluded that "extensive reading is a significant factor in children's social acceptability." Heisler (68) found that 600 comic book and non-comic book readers made much the same scores on the California Test of Personality.

The importance of social and emotional adjustments in reading readiness has been attested in a number of studies. Smith (136), has summarized 136 studies dealing with readiness, including some thirty-five titles dealing with emotional and social readiness. More general discussions of the role of social and emotional factors in readiness have been presented by Harrison (63) and by Hildreth (70). Since readiness is a factor in reading achievement at all grade levels, the above references underline the close relationships between social and emotional adjustments and reading success throughout the elementary and secondary school.

b. *Interrelationships of Reading Difficulties and Personality Disturbances.*

Of all the specific relationships between language and personality the area of reading difficulties related to emotional and personality difficulties has been most thoroughly investigated. Early summaries of some of the research include those of Tulchin (153), of Wilking (164) and at least three articles by Gates (45, 46, 47) which also included original research findings. Russell (119) reported studies with some conflict between the results of group investigations and individual case studies. Witty

(165) used the same classification of over twenty studies and added a section on the place of therapy in remedial work. He concludes that evidence of close relationship between emotional difficulties and reading difficulties comes from four sources: (1) case studies by analysts, educators and physicians (2) comparisons of groups of retarded and successful readers (3) studies of individuals over long periods of time and (4) remedial work emphasizing therapeutic methods. In a careful study of 22 cases of extreme reading disability Robinson (115) found nine cases with emotional difficulties, as defined by a psychiatrist, and also reviewed the literature in this area.

The present writer has been unable completely to verify Witty's finding that group comparisons of retarded and successful readers provide evidence of a causal relationship between emotional difficulties and reading difficulties. Witty himself stresses multiple causation in reviewing case studies (165:291). In tabulating forty research studies involving the relationship of reading difficulties and personality disturbances the writer found fifteen that claimed intimate or causal relationships and twenty-five which discovered no significant differences between groups of retarded and normal readers or which included personality difficulties as only one of a constellation of related causes. Little or no relationship was found in studies such as those of Sister Mary Vera (157), Gann (44) and Betts (11). Close relationships were found in small numbers of case studies reported by Blanchard (14, 15), Tulchin (153), Gates (46), Hardwick (62), Vaughn (156), Missildine (99), Lantz and Liebes (86), Wiksell (163) and Stevenson (140). Representative studies giving emotional difficulties as only one of a group of possible causes include those of Castner (22), Leland (89), Parker (108), Gates (47), Jackson (75), McCaul (93), Robinson (116) and Young (170). Osburn (106) believes that such factors as lack of auditory discrimination and lack of readiness at school entrance are

primary factors in reading disability but classifies emotional difficulties as a secondary factor in reading difficulties.

One facet of the relationship of reading to adjustment is the study of reading abilities of delinquent children. Some evidence on the academic achievements of delinquents is given in the National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook (104) dealing with delinquency. In 1936 Fendrick and Bond (39) found a group of delinquent boys in New York City to be markedly retarded in reading ability. Feinberg (37, 38) verified this finding in two other studies and Ash (6) reported discrepancies between reported schooling and academic achievements of adolescent delinquents. Thomas (146) and Klumb (81) found that reading interests of delinquent boys are not as varied or mature as those of non-delinquent boys. A careful unpublished study by Wickham (162) found the most fruitful data for distinguishing groups of delinquents and non-delinquents in the emotionally charged relationships between parent and child and teacher and child. The delinquent groups were much below average in school grades and 58 per cent of the group stated a dislike for one or more school subjects with English being the most disliked. Wickham, Harris (104) and others stress that a constellation of causal factors is frequently associated with delinquency. The studies quoted do not establish poor reading ability as a direct cause of the maladjustments labelled delinquency but do indicate that the two are often associated.

While there is still some uncertainty about the influence of personality factors upon success or failure in groups of children, there is no doubt that personality factors may affect reading achievement of individuals. Current study may be most profitably directed toward how and why the two are related. In this connection observations made by Gates (47) in 1941 still seem to be pertinent. Some of his findings with other generalizations added are:

- (a) Personality difficulties are frequently

but not universally associated with reading difficulties.

(b) In cases where they occur together, personality difficulties may be causes, concomitants, or results of reading difficulties.

(c) Emotional difficulties usually appear as part of a constellation of difficulties causing reading retardation.

(d) There is no single personality pattern characteristic of reading failure and there is no proved one-to-one relationship between type of adjustment difficulty and type of reading disability. For example, feelings of insecurity resulting from undue home pressure for achievement may result in low reading achievement marked by withdrawal, compulsive, anxious reading marked by frequent errors, or higher achievement in reading than would be expected from mental level.

(e) Symptoms associated with reading difficulties are commonly aggressive reactions, withdrawing tendencies or general insecurity and apprehension.

(f) If emotional, adjustment disturbances are one of a group of primary causes of reading difficulties, retardation in other academic learnings often occurs.

(g) If reading difficulties are a cause of emotional difficulties, skilled remedial work in reading may clear up rather easily a considerable number of difficulties. If deep-seated personality difficulties are a cause of reading difficulties, ordinary remedial work is likely to be ineffective and more intensive therapy is required.

(h) Diagnosis and remediation in reading are often more acceptable to children and to parents than they are in fundamental personality maladjustments. Accordingly the reading aspects of a problem may be emphasized in the beginning stages of treatment.

(i) The above generalizations probably apply to the other language arts as much as to reading. They should all be regarded as hypotheses for further scientific study.

### C. *Positive Values of Reading and Literature*

From at least the days of the music and literary schools of ancient Athens, teachers have always used literature in an attempt to influence the personality and character of their students. Much of the modern writing on the subject continues to be speculative or hortatory, with titles such as *What Can Literature Do for Me?* (132) or *How to Improve Your Personality by Reading* (149). A beginning on the scientific study of the problem seems to have been initiated in the United States by Moore (102). A brief summary of some of the available studies has been made by N. B. Smith (135) who also reported on the results of a "free-response" investigation in which children were asked to write about any reading material which had changed their thinking or attitudes (134). Witty (165, 167) has contributed at least two summaries of research on the values or effects of reading. W. S. Gray (58) summarized thirty studies of the effects of reading on such things as information and belief, attitudes and morale, public opinion and voting. The most complete summary dealing with bibliotherapy as such seems to be that of Russell and Shrodes (123). Worthwhile general articles are those of Bryan (18), L. Gray (57) D. V. Smith (133) and Wenzel (161).

The more specific studies of the effects of reading and literature deal with various types of reading material and different age groups. Waples' (160) studies are concerned with the reading habits of adults but have implications for understanding children and youth. Loban's (90) and Meckel's (97) doctoral studies are concerned with the effects of reading short stories and a novel on adolescents. Wampler and Garrison (159) suggest books useful in understanding problems of adolescence. Hegge and Voelker (67) suggest reading materials for "non-academic" pupils. Stoughton and Ray (142) found that children in the second, fourth, and sixth grades seldom named a character from a book as the person they would "most like to

be like." Russell (122) found that a group of teachers could recall various influences of books on themselves during childhood. Child and others (23) have an interesting analysis of possible effects of third-grade readers on children using them. Sister Mary Agnes (2) and Groves (60) suggest possible influences of children's poetry. Goldman (51) feels that the values of fables in character education may be overrated and Lawler (87) suggests some personality values for participation in communication activities.

One of two recent developments has been the planned use of different therapeutic techniques with retarded readers. Many of the older studies of remedial programs, such as those of Kirk (80), Hegge (66), and Monroe and Backus (101) reported personality gains as a correlate of reading gains. The newer emphasis is on therapy for its own sake. Axline (8, 9) has two descriptions of play and non-directive therapy and Kunst (83) described psychological treatment of reading disability cases. Bills (12) found significant changes in the reading ability of eight third grade children as a result of play therapy experience and Goodman and others (53) reported improvement in over half the cases of a group of elementary-school children treated for nine months with a combination of psychotherapy and specific remedial work. Meyer (98) reported, from a psychoanalytic point of view, an experiment in storytelling used as therapy.

The second recent development involving several of the language arts has been the use of psychodrama and sociodrama in the treatment of adjustment difficulties. Del Torto and Cornyetz (31) have a 26-item bibliography on psychodrama and Shoobs (131) reports on its use in the schools. The Shaftels (129, 130) have two descriptions of the use of sociodrama in the intermediate grades. McGann (94) reported gains in reading competence and attitude as a result of a series of sociodramas devised to treat personality problems simultane-

ously with reading problems. The emphasis in such studies upon a combination of therapy and remedial instruction rather than concentration on reading techniques alone offers new possibilities for clinical and other remedial work in the various language arts fields.

### Summary

The studies summarized above, nearly two hundred in number, reveal many gaps in our knowledge of the interrelationships of personality and language behavior. There are numerous accounts of child development in the areas of preschool language and of reading especially, but only a few of these relate language behavior to personality factors. This paucity of effective correlation seems to be due in part to lack of adequate instruments and other difficulties in measuring personality traits of children and adolescents. Some progress has been made in studying children's personalities through the *content* of their language productions and, usually in test situations, through the *structure* of their language responses. Some of the newer projective techniques (usually involving language) and more skilled observations of children's general behavior offer hope that more rewarding studies of interrelationships of language and personality can be made.

Although results are still meager, there exists some evidence that amount and type of language behavior is often closely related to other phases of personality. At present the most detailed analysis seems to be in the area of social-emotional disturbances as related to reading difficulties. A promising lead has been opened up in the influences of reading, discussion, sociodrama, etc. on personality not only as catharsis and therapy in difficult cases but as procedures with normal children. Language activities are causes, concomitants, or results of personality factors but many detailed relationships must be explored if teachers and parents are to have the help they sometimes need in guiding growth in both language and personality.

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# Look and Listen

Edited by RAOUL R. HAAS<sup>1</sup>

In their excellent volume, "Teaching through Radio and Television," Levenson and Stasbeff state: "A wise selection of recordings . . . implies a knowledge of the material that is available. Suitable material presents needed information. Through vivid dramatizations, reproductions of voices of leaders of past and present and discussions of important issues, the recordings can serve to stimulate classroom activity of various sorts. However, this is possible only if the recorded material is related to classroom studies."<sup>2</sup>

To assist teachers and parents in making a wise selection of recordings for home and school use, "Look and Listen" presents this month reviews of representative discs submitted by various educational recording companies. This list supplements the reviews published in this column in May 1952.

●Columbia Records, Inc., Bridgeport, Connecticut. The seven new releases from Columbia are available in both 78 and 45 rpm speeds and are nonbreakable. All have excellent surfaces and are free of noise and scratch. They are cased in colorful and attractive jackets. Unless otherwise noted, these recordings are perhaps more appropriate for home than school use.

1. *Alice in Wonderland and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (MJV 505), and,
2. *Jack and the Beanstalk and Hansel and Gretel* (MJV 503).

Brief adaptations of familiar folk tales with music and sound effects. Offered in coloring books albums, these are 6 inch records. The four named here are pleasantly tuneful and treated humorously making them suitable for children three to five years of age. Not recommended, however, at the expense of longer and truer adaptations.

3. *Hold Your Head Up High and Dance and Whistle*. Joseph Marais and Miranda. (MJV 151).

These songs invite participation and are suggestive for classroom, playground, and gymnasium activities with primary grade children. The first side encourages imaginative play involving the sounds and movements of animals including a snail, a monkey and a fish. *Dance and Whistle* is built on Latin-American rhythms and encourages dance activities for both boys and girls. Pleasantly orchestrated and sung.

4. *Rocky Jones and the Space Pirates*, Rocky Jones with supporting cast; script by Warren Wilson. (MJV 153).

This one would gain through video, but neither classroom teacher nor parent will miss it.

5. *Space Ship to Mars*. Paul Tripp as Mr. I. Magination with Donny Harris Incidental music by Ray Carter. (MJV 146).

Science fiction enthusiasts will enjoy this record which may be used to motivate science classes in their study of physics, astronomy, etc. Sound effect and music are well integrated with a fast-paced narrative dealing with a trip to Mars and what may be seen there. Recommended also for enjoyment.

6. *Square Dances for Children*. Peter Piper with Tony Mottola Orchestra. Lyrics by Marion Abeson. (MJV 147).

This recording may be used for participation activities in home and school. Traditional square dance tunes have been popularly or-

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Haas is Director, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.

<sup>2</sup>N. Y.: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1952 (Revised). P. 365.

chestrated and "Looby Loo," "Ten Little Indians," etc., have been given new lyrics. Some instruction in square dance figures prior to the playing of the record would aid young dancers in following the caller.

●Enrichment Materials, Inc., 246 Fifth Avenue, New York 1. Four new titles are now available in the Enrichment series. Each is again based on one of the popular "Landmark Books" published by Random House. The titles may be in either 78 or 33 1/3 rpm speeds and are non-breakable. The lang plays combine two titles; the conventional speed requires two 10-inch records for each dramatization.

As in the first four titles of the series (reviewed in "Look and Listen" for December 1952), the new records achieve a high level of fidelity in the reproduction of voices and sound effects. The surfaces are splendid. The musical bridges are appropriate to the subject matter.

"Leads to Listening," teaching guides prepared by Helen M. Carpenter, are available for each as well as a general guide for those who wish to employ these recordings for instructional purposes.

It is the opinion of the writer that these recordings with their wealth of detail depend on previous learning experiences for their best utilization. They will be most successful if presented to summarize or to culminate a unit of work. Considerable preliminary work will enable the listener to gain far more from the several episodes than is possible with no previous introduction to the content and theme of the dramatizations.

1. *Paul Revere and the Minute Men*. Adapted from the book of the same title by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. (LLP 103).

This dramatization most nearly realizes unity in narrative—an achievement not always possible with the four episode plan utilized in all the "Landmark" recordings to date. There is

a continuous flow of story line and the various percussion instruments employed for incidental music and effect seem to fit naturally into the plot.

We meet the young Revere and follow him through his participation in the Boston Tea Party, his ride to warn the colonists, and the dangers he avoids by his daring and intelligence. The interpretations of the various players are of high standard.

2. *Our Independence and the Constitution*. Adapted from Canfield's book of the same name. (LLP 103).

Less vivid than *Paul Revere*, this recording takes a difficult subject and dramatizes it with interest and good taste. We are introduced to various colonial leaders—Washington, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton—through the eyes of Debbie, a young Philadelphia girl. Dr. Franklin shows, in a report to Debbie, the difficulties involved in getting agreement on principles for a workable union.

3. *Building the First Transcontinental Railroad*. From the "Landmark" book of the same title by Adele Nathan. (LLP 104).

Again an exciting moment in United States history is portrayed in the climax to this dramatization—the driving of the golden spike linking east and west by rail.

Famous names in California history are brought to life through excellent casting and Lincoln's interest in the growth and development of the transcontinental railroad is depicted. Work songs of the period are introduced throughout the narrative.

4. *The Wright Brothers: Pioneers of American Aviation*. From Quentin Reynolds' book of the same name. (LLP 104).

The well-known story of the trials at Kitty Hawk are depicted in this dramatization as well as the boyhood of Wilbur and Orville Wright. The episodes of their early life are somewhat

forced, but the recording moves along at a good pace and we are well prepared to appreciate the tribute to the Wrights given by Captain Eddie Rickenbaker as the narrative is brought to a close.

●Folkways Records and Service Corp., 117 West 46th Street, New York 19. Authentic material in the social sciences is often difficult to find. Folkways Records fills this need in their pressings. Available are discs from various foreign cultures as well as our own. These recordings are not intended to provide entertainment alone—but to educate, to inform. They fulfill the function of entertainment, too, of course; but on a high intellectual level.

In the records reviewed here all of which are highly recommended for both home and school use—one will find uniformly high reproductive quality. Discs are available, in most instances, in 78 as well as 33 1/3 rpm speeds. Write directly to Folkways for information and a complete listing of record albums and filmstrips.

1. *Cowboy Ballads*. Sung by Cisco Houston with guitar. (FP 22).

These authentic ballads are not "fancied up". They are sung as they might well be on the range to-day. They are adaptable to any study of the west and are suitable for upper grade through adult levels. Included are "Chisolm Trail," "Riding Old Paint," "Sweet Betsy from Pike," etc. Folksong enthusiasts will certainly wish to have this recording in their collections.

2. *Talking Dust Bowl*. Written, sung and played by Woody Guthrie. (FP 11).

Here are examples of modern ballads, having been written by Guthrie within the past three or four years. The theme of the "dust bowl ballads" is, in Mr. Guthrie's words, "... to try to show you how it is to live under the

wild and windy actions of the great duststorms that ride in and out and up and down. . . . That old dustbowl is still there and that high dirtwind is still there."

●Teach-O-Disc. Popular Science Publishing Co., Inc., Audio-Visual Division, 353 Fourth Avenue, New York. Numerous titles are contained in the catalog of Teach-O-Discs, many of which are designed especially for English classes at the upper elementary, junior and senior high school levels. Available on 12-inch, nonbreakable, 78 rpm discs are dramatizations and readings of poems, plays, novels and short stories.

Presented without musical backgrounds and with few sound effects, these recordings are forthright and unpretentious and have a valuable place in the classroom. They are especially valuable in speech classes where models of good diction and sound interpretation are desired. Performers are not identified. The casting, however, is in most instances happy.

Teaching guides accompany each recording. One would not perhaps wish to follow them too closely as there is a tendency to direct attention to detailed and often trivial questions. The background for the teacher's use, however, has value. One might quarrel, too, at the neglect of contemporary works. But where the conventional literary masterpieces are concerned, Teach-O-Discs offer a varied assortment which have still a contribution to make to general education.

Among the poetry recordings available are:

1. Whittier's *Snowbound* and *Worship*; Holmes' *Old Ironsides*; Whitman's *For You, O, Democracy*. (#207).

These standard works are coupled on one record and are well if uninspiringly read. The interpretation is catholic; the reader's diction is clear and forceful.

2. Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride*; Browning's *Incident of the French Camp*; Henley's *Invictus* and Whitman's *O Captain!*

The use of restrained sound effects—hoof beats and church bells—in Longfellow's poem makes this an exciting poetic experience. The poem as it is read actually sounds much better than it really is.

3. Coleridge: *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. (#205 & 206).

Read as a dialogue, Coleridge's poem comes very much alive in this recording. One might not agree with the interpretation of the whole, but there can be no quarrel with the effectiveness of the reading. This disc should have value in motivating a study of the work and aid in its comprehension.

4. Longfellow: *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. (#202).

This poem has been dramatized and prose employed in depicting Alden's proposal for Standish. One wonders why the poem was not permitted to "speak for itself."

The multiplicity of events and characters in a novel presents an almost insurmountable problem in developing a dramatization which permits the full sweep of the work to be compressed into a fifteen minute script. A narrator is often used to sketch the background and events and to introduce the main characters in important episodes. This is the form employed in the Teach-O-Disc presentations of the following novels:

1. Hale: *The Man Without a Country*. (#101 & 102).

Well cast and dramatized, this recording depends entirely on the skill of the actors to make the story come alive. The performers do as well as they can with a story which is didactic at best.

2. Hawthorne: *The House of the Seven Gables*. (#112B & 113A and B).

This complex, psychological tale of mystery and suspense is interestingly presented, but would be more rewarding had the novel been read before the dramatization is played. The narrator has too much to do to give the listener sufficient background to relate the episodes included.

3. Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities*. (#111 & 112).

Again, the problem of compressing a lengthy novel has beset the scenarist and admirable though the casting and interpretation is, the need for a prior reading of the novel is indicated if one is to follow the story line with comprehension.

4. Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*. (#130 & 131).

This condensation presents incidents which reveal the character of Scrooge. Admirably done, the recording is recommended for its sincerity and sustained characterizations. Not dependent on sound effects and mood music, the dramatization is true to the spirit of the original.

5. Twain: *Huckleberry Finn*. (#189 & 190).

These discs present several episodes from the novel and features Huck and Jim. The relationship between Huck and the runaway slave is done with good taste and an appropriate blending of pathos and humor. Its use will not substitute for a reading of the book, but it is recommended for follow up and review.

Scenes from Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* are presented on records #120 & 121. The lines from this delightful comedy come through with spirit and the players will stimulate young readers to comprehension of and pleasure in the play.

# The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>

The following members of the Council have been nominated for members of the Elementary Section Committee, 1954-56.

Miss Irean Coyner  
Supervisor of Elementary Education  
Oakland, California

Anna O'Toole  
Indiana State Teachers College  
Indiana, Pa.

Mr. John Treanor  
Francis Parkman School  
Boston, Massachusetts

Dr. Mary Wilson, Supervisor  
Lincoln Parish  
Ruston, Louisiana

The following members of the Council have been nominated for members of the Board of Directors representing the Elementary Section, 1954-56.

Dr. Constance McCullough  
San Francisco State College  
San Francisco, California

Miss Ethel Holmes  
State Supervisor of Elementary Education  
State Department of Education  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dr. Roxie E. Alexander  
Curriculum Director  
Vallejo, California

Dr. Mildred Swearingen  
Associate Professor of Education  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida

Miss Marion Zollinger  
Supervisor of Language Arts  
Portland, Oregon

Dr. Max J. Herzberg, Past President of the National Council and Director of Publications for the Council has published a spirited article in *Publishers Weekly* which will be of great interest to all teachers of the language arts. The article is essentially a reply to a report on *The Conference on Reading Development*, prepared by Lester Asheim for the American Book Publishers Council. Dr. Herzberg quotes Dr. Asheim as reporting to the Conference to the effect that teachers may be largely responsible for the limited popularity of book reading, and that the recommendation of an English teacher is frequently a predictor of the book's probable failure. Dr. Asheim's report further charged that in many people's minds book reading is associated with the unpleasant image of the stereotype of the "old maid school teacher."

In his reply, Dr. Herzberg calls attention to the fact that the percentage of married teachers in our schools is constantly increasing, that the vast majority of teachers have a new attitude toward their work, that they are cheerful, friendly, on good terms with their youngsters, eager to help them, often youthful even when they have white hair. Admitting that some teachers are still employing outworn techniques, he stressed the fact that organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English have for a long time been giving excellent leadership in the improvement of instruction, especially in reading. As examples of this leadership, he cites and describes the new reading list called *Good Reading*, prepared by a National Council Committee, which names 1,250 books in 35 subject-categories, similar book lists for the secondary and elementary schools, and the recent report of the Commission on the English Curriculum

<sup>1</sup>John Deere Junior High School, Moline, Illinois.

of the National Council called the *English Language Arts*. Dr. Herzberg closes with an appeal to publishers to cooperate with teachers of English and to recognize them as their friends.



The one hundred most difficult spelling words, in terms of frequency of use and frequency of misspelling, for elementary pupils, have been listed by Professor James A. Fitzgerald of Fordham University. Mr. Fitzgerald compiled his list from an investigation of studies made by Brittain, Fitzgerald, Johnson, and Swenson and Caldwell. The list appeared in an article, *Spelling Words Difficult for Children in Grades II-VI*, in the December issue of the *Elementary School Journal* and is quoted here with permission of the author and publisher.

all right	it	swimming
*am	it's	*teacher
*and	*Jan. (as listed)	*teacher's
are	*know	*thanksgiving
*because	letter	*that's
birthday	like	the
Christmas	likes	*their
*coming	me	them
*cousin	morning	then
*didn't	mother	*there
*don't	*Mrs.	they
down	my	*time
every	*name	*to
*everybody	*now	*today
*Feb. (as listed)	o'clock	tonight
fine	Oct.	*too
*for	on	*two
*friend	one	*very
*from	*our	want
*getting	play	was
goes	*pretty	*we
*going	*received	went
*good-by	right	were
*guess	Santa Claus	*when
*Halloween	*Saturday	will
*have	school	with
haven't	*some	won't
he	sometime	would
*here	*sometimes	*write
him	stationery	*writing
how	summer	*you
I	*Sunday	*your

I'll  
\*I'm  
\*most persistent demons

suppose  
sure



"They Teach the Three R's," an article by J. Rollin Grant in the *Minnesota Journal of Education* for December, answers a question which is put to teachers much too often today: "Is the school today turning out a more skilled product than it did in the 'good old days'?" More often than not the question is, "Is the school doing *as good a job* as it used to do?"

Educational literature already has studies by Judd, Jersild, Gray, Wrightstone, and Witty which answer this question. However, these findings can't be repeated too often in today's climate of doubt concerning the schools, and Dr. Grant's article, which we will summarize, presents some new findings in a very readable fashion.

The Midcentury White House Conference showed that the median school years completed by people born about 1890 was eight years whereas the median for those born about 1920 was twelve. The diversity of interests and abilities must be recognized, as must the greater percentage of school attendance of the present generation.

For specific abilities, a test of high school seniors of Indiana in 1941 compared with a similar group of 1919 showed through the use of a repeated test that 80 per cent of the 1941 group scored above the median of the 1919 group. A similar comparison was made in Philadelphia which found that the average upper-elementary pupil of 1945 did as well or better than the 1932 pupil on a test of the "fundamentals." In Chicago at the Hyde Park High School seniors of 1949 scored 21 per cent higher on an arithmetic test than 1939 seniors.

Tests of teaching methods, too, have found results in favor of newer methods over traditional methods. Without going into details, a study at Washington High School in St. Louis in 1949-50 showed very favorable results to

the newer methods of teaching. Greater gains were shown on the *Iowa Educational Development Test*, correctness in writing, reading literature, and in general vocabulary over a group taught under the "traditional" methods. The one negative result was in general mathematical ability, in which the gain was 1.58 in the life adjustment program to 1.93 for the traditional program.

A similar study at the same school in 1950-51 again found that in seven out of nine tests and in the composite score the life adjustment pupils scored higher than did the pupils in the other group.

While it should be remembered that at the present stage of development of educational science few instruments and studies are above reproach in questions of reliability and validity, with these facts teachers do have the ammunition to stage a defensive action when the schools are attacked as being inferior to those of yesteryear.

The fifth edition of *Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials* has been published by the Division of Surveys and Field Surveys, George Peabody College for Teachers. The latest edition contains 2,521 entries, the great majority of which are for free materials or those which cost under fifty cents.

*Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials* may be ordered from the publisher at Nashville, Tenn. Price one dollar.

A copy of an interesting study by Ruth E. Oaks has reached our desk. *A Study of the Vowel Situation in a Primary Vocabulary*, which appeared in the May issue of *Education* and is now available as a reprint pamphlet, is an investigation of vowels and vowel combinations which appear in certain basal readers designed for use in the primary grades.

Miss Oaks found that the program of studies embracing the vowel situation would probably follow this sequence: "At the primer

level, 'short' vowels would be introduced; at the first-reader level, the remaining 'short' vowels, and vowel *e* before *r* as in *mother*; at the second-reader level, 'long' vowels, 'silent' vowels, vowel *a* before *r* as in *arm*, diphthongs, and a group of nine unclassified vowel letters with varied diacritical markings; at the third-reader level, additional 'long' vowels, 'silent' vowels, vowels-before-*r*, and one new unclassified vowel letter. Each vowel situation which is introduced is carried over into the succeeding reader levels."

Copies of the reprint are available at 50 cents each from the Reading Clinic, Department of Psychology, Temple University, Philadelphia 22.

"Strengths and Resources for Guiding Children" is the theme for the Association for Childhood Education International Study Conference which meets in Denver April 5-10. The conference will feature study and laboratory groups, school visiting, a functional display, lectures, a branch materials display (ACEI branch materials), a resource center, interest groups, and, of course, recreation.

For information about the Conference write to the ACEI, 1200 15 Street N. W., Washington 5, D. C.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews has recently released the sixth and seventh in its Intergroup Education Pamphlet series: *Group Processes in Intergroup Education*, by Jean D. Grambs, and *Teachers in the Community*, by Harry Bard.

*Group Processes in Intergroup Education* summarizes the major available facts about group processes and sets forth in clear language a number of practical group work methods that are useful in the classroom. Dr. Grambs, a specialist in educational sociology at Stanford, lists these guiding principles that provide a framework within which classroom practices may be developed:

1. The relationships of children to each other, the feelings of acceptance or rejection, materially affect the kind of learning they do, the attitudes toward learning that they develop.

2. A good learning situation is one in which these feelings of children are taken into account in organizing work and study groups, and individual work.

3. The pattern of interaction, the ways in which one child moves into leadership one day and is a follower the next; the development of the feeling of belonging together; the growth of antipathies towards seemingly normal youngsters; the group code that governs what is or is not done—these are part of the teacher's concern in working with students in a classroom.

4. There are ways of finding out about the structure and the culture of the child society which the teacher needs in order to gain access into this hidden world.

5. No class becomes a genuine group except for short periods of time when it has successfully accomplished a class goal through the efforts of the subgroups in it.

6. Every class is made up of many small natural units built from mutual need, propinquity, interests, and the "X" factor that makes one person like another.

7. The teacher creates unity of effort and orderly learning situations by working with the subgroups much as a symphony director works with the instrumental groups in the orchestra; each is different, each is composed of different numbers of persons, and they play different instruments; together they complement, supplement, and harmonize.

8. Group skills develop in individuals as they are helped to see themselves objectively in their group relations. Discussions of leadership roles, member roles, things that help the group move forward, things that interfere, and the process of problem solving are essential.

9. The relationship between classroom group living and out-of-school group member-

ship must be made explicit. Different types of group belonging and group identification—must be spelled out with the children, many times, in many different situations, and at each grade and age level.

*Teachers and the Community* tells the story of what one community—Baltimore—has done through in-service education to help its teachers arrive at new understandings of group life and relationships in the local community.

The Baltimore in-service program emphasizes the three C's: the Child, the Community, and the Curriculum. It might be said that the program is evidence that in the 1950's the intergroup education concern of the 1940's is being integrated with the community study and participation movement of the 1930's for the higher appreciation and wider cooperation among persons of all religions, racial stocks, ethnic origins, and cultural levels.

Pamphlets in the Intergroup Education series are priced at 25 cents each. They may be ordered from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16.



Here are the Junior Literary Guild Selections for March, 1953:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years of age: *Peter's Long Walk*, by Lee Kingman. Doubleday and Company, \$2.50.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years of age: *Beasts and Nonsense*, by Marie Hall Ets. Viking Press, \$2.00.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *Children of the Blizzard*, by Heluiz Washburne and Anauta. John Day Company, \$2.50.

For older girls 12 to 16 years of age: *As the Wheel Turns*, by Anne Tufts. Henry Holt and Company, \$2.50.

For older boys 12 to 16 years of age: *The Last Fort*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth. John C. Winston Company, \$2.75.

# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

EDITED BY MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

[May Hill Arbuthnot is well-known as teacher, writer, and lecturer in the field of children's books. She is author of the volume, *CHILDREN AND BOOKS* (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and Associate Professor Emeritus of Western Reserve University.]

Books for children to grow on are of as many varieties as the interests and needs of the children who read them. Here is a miscellany to begin with.

*A for the Ark.* Written and illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1952. \$2.00 (5-8 years).

Before children learn to read they are attracted by the bright letters of the alphabet, and Roger Duvoisin's book is so full of letters, animals, and deep, rich colors, that children of any age will enjoy it. He has built his alphabet on the reasonable assumption that when Noah called the animals into the Ark he called them in alphabetical order to make sure none was over-looked. Even so, his system gave him considerable trouble. Donkeys, Dogs, and Doves stepped up smartly with the D's but the Ducks dawdled because they enjoyed the rain. Then, Mr. Leopard appeared without his wife because, as he explained, she liked the name "Panther" better. And poor Noah had B-Bears and U-Bears for Ursus. But, at last, he got them all. The drawings of the animals are often very funny and always decorative. As first aids to dictionaries, phonetics, and fun we now have superb alphabet books—Wanda Gag's *ABC Bunny*, Phyllis McGinley's *All Round the Town*, Fritz Eichenberg's *Ape in a Cape* and *A For the Ark*. And don't forget Lear's "Non-sense Alphabet."

*A Little Book of Prayers.* Selected by Quail Hawkins. Illustrated by Marguerite De Angeli. Doubleday, 1952. \$2.00 (3-6).

This new edition of Miss Hawkins' careful selection of prayers for young children is lovely. Mrs. De Angeli has illustrated and adorned it in her most tender style, so that "the spirit of grace and supplication" is in the very look of the pages. The two versions of "Now I Lay Me" and "Now I Wake" are reassuring as prayers for children should always be. "A Little Page's Song" is charming and the book closes with Victor Hugo's comforting "Good Night!"

*The Golden Treasury of Natural History.* By Bertha M. Parker. Illustrated by seventeen artists. Simon and Schuster, 1952. \$5.00. (7-14).

It is thrilling to see a child plunge eagerly into this big book, pore over it for an hour and then come back to it again and again. Over 500 color plates catch his eye. The text moves from ancient animals, the earth's diary in rocks, through the animal kingdom, plants, and so on to the sun and stars. The text is scientifically sound but written with simplicity and clarity. The author is a distinguished teacher of children in the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago and her ability to challenge young minds is evident in her writing. This will make a fine reference book for both home and school.

*A Book of Nature.* Written and illustrated by Pelagie Doane. Oxford University Press, 1952. \$4.00 (8-14)

The preparation of this beautiful book must have taken years of study, research, and work with brush and paints. Twenty-four pages in full color, with 12 to 24 small pictures on a page, enable the artist to cover a vast field. Over the Mountain, In the Woods, To the Sea, are her three large divisions, under which she describes and pictures flowers, shrubs, mammals, and other live creatures, with sea weeds, worms, and jellies added to the ocean lore. This is an identification type of book which will be as much enjoyed by adults as by the children. The information has been checked by authorities.

*Picture-stories* for the youngest children include some unusually robust plots and pictures. As, for instance:

*The Biggest Bear.* Story and illustrations by Lynd Ward. Houghton Mifflin, 1952. \$2.75. (4-8).

Johnny Orchard was humiliated because all the barns in the countryside except theirs had a big bear skin nailed up to the side. The Orchards always said, "Better a bear in the orchard than an Orchard in the bear." But that was no consolation to Johnny. He made up his mind that he was going to get his own bear, and he did, a live one! But neither Johnny nor the bear lived happily ever after. Complications seemed to grow with the bear and while the solution of all their problems was not entirely satisfactory, still it was a solution. Lynd Ward's text and his magnificent pictures make this book a unique contribution to the looking and listening pleasures of children.

*Even Steven.* By Will and Nicolas. Harcourt, Brace, 1952. \$2.25. (5-9).

A story about Barnacle Ranch with cowboys, cowponies, a boy named Hobie, and some villainous horse thieves is bound to be exciting. It tells how Hobie happened to choose a little

runt of a horse for his very own and how the horse earned its name. But the real excitement starts when Hobie and Even Steven set out to get the Barnacle Ranch ponies away from the horse thieves. Children are enthralled by this good plot, suspense, and dramatic pictures. They may not catch all the wild beauty of such a picture as "Hobie and Steven led the horses back to the ranch" in which the long faces of the horses and their flowing manes are reminiscent of some of William Blake's crowding angels. But children respond to the action of these pictures and want to gallop and cry "Yippee!"

*The Lovely Summer.* Story and illustrations by Marc Simont. Harper Brothers, 1952. \$2.00 (4-8).

This story turns upon the happy and unhappy childhood experiences which left Gladys, the rabbit, an optimist and her brother Jerome a pessimist who looked before he leapt. When human beings appeared and began to plant a garden, Gladys thought they were dear, kind people but Jerome feared the worst. When the dear, kind people tried to fence the rabbits out or trap them in, Gladys still felt all was for the best and Gladys undubitably won. Pictures and text are amusing and sophisticated. Children catch the humor of this duel between the garden devotees and the nibbling bunnies and they miss the sophistication. This makes the book good reading for both children and adults.

*Babar's Visit to Bird Island.* Pictures and story by Laurent de Brunoff. Translated by Merle Haas. Random House, 1952. \$3.50. (4-7).

If the late Jean de Brunoff could see his son's continuations of Babar's adventures, he would be as pleased as the children are, even the grownup children who encountered Babar twenty-one years ago. For here, in the original full size and gorgeous colors, is another story about the royal and dressy elephants. In this story they are invited to visit the King and Queen of the birds on their beautiful island. King Babar and Queen Celeste wear their

crowns, of course, but unfortunately bird royalty can't do this because of their crests. Otherwise, everything is done on a splendid scale. If Babar and Celeste seem to have grown a bit sedate in their twenty-one years, the royal children—Pom, Flora and Alexander, try everything and are as exuberant as the young readers who will enjoy them.

*Linda and the Indians.* Story and pictures by C. W. Anderson. Macmillan, 1952. \$2.00. (4-8).

Little girls must have been demanding their rights to heroine status from the author of the *Billy and Blaze* books. So here is Linda with her pony Daisy, in search of adventure. Unfortunately, Linda does not encounter a forest fire or marauding gypsies or much of anything. She has to play at cowboy and Indians. Then, one day she finds some real Indian relics, is chased by a fierce dog, and gets lost. She is rescued by a camp counsellor and at the camp fire that night, her story is the most exciting of all. The pictures are beautiful but Linda's story is no match for Blaze. The dog episode is regrettable. Children should be taught how to get on with strange dogs as well as horses and this fear-inducing incident is unfortunate, especially for girls.

*Mister Dog.* By Margaret Wise Brown. Illustrated by Garth Williams. A Little Golden Book, Simon and Schuster, 1952. 25 cents. (4-6).

In the overwhelming flood of Golden Books, good, excellent, and indifferent, this one was almost overlooked. It begins, "Once upon a time there was a funny dog named Crispin's Crispian because—he belonged to himself." When the dog who belonged to himself meets a boy who belongs to himself, they join forces and enjoy life. There is no story but there is a nice, peaceful curling-up-and-going-to-sleep kind of ending which, with Garth Williams' pictures, satisfy the 4's.

This must have been one of Margaret Wise Brown's last books before her sudden death in Paris. Her feeling for the cadenced repetitional speech of young children, her whimsy, and her incredible inventiveness will be greatly missed. If *Runaway Bunny* and *Bright Island* are still among her best, she has a dozen others guaranteed to soothe "won't-be-comforted little bairns."

Turning now to the next age group—the beginning-to-read and really-reading children—there are some excellent books. It is also pleasant to report that in spite of all the reviews of *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, as a book for grownups, the children are snatching it away from their parents and reading it straight through, with chuckles and tears. (See review in January issue.) And now, space-travel addicts, attention!

*Space Cat.* By Ruthven Todd. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Scribner's, 1952. \$2.00 (6-9).

Air-minded, space-minded, moon-minded small fry are going to revel in all the details of Space Cat's adventures. His real name was Flyball. He began by stowing away on an airplane and adopting a pilot. Later he stowed away in a rocket test and was almost flattened out. When he survived, his admiring master had a space suit made for him and, on the great day, the two of them took off for the moon. The details of that voyage and their adventures on the moon are so convincing that it is hard to remember that no one has done it yet, not even Flyball in his space pants. The pictures are as witty and amusing as the story.

*The Space Ship Under the Apple Tree.* Story and illustrations by Louis Slobodkin. Macmillan, 1952. \$2.00 (8-12).

If grandma had seen what Eddie saw under the apple tree, she might not have addressed her visitor familiarly as "Marty." For when Eddie first saw him, he was walking upside down on the apple tree and nearby, hidden in a gully that was never there before, was the space ship

in which Marty had travelled from the planet Martinea. Eddie loved all the inter-stellar gadgets which Marty carried with him until his visitor took unfair advantage of this equipment to win all the prizes at the Boy Scout Jamboree. Teaching Marty about fair play, friends, good sportsmanship, and the like was not easy, and when grandma and the gander mislaid some of Marty's Zurianomaticchrome Wire, it began to look as if Eddie might have his visitor on hand for life. But Martinea got help through at last and Eddie and the apple tree were once more alone. Story and pictures are deliciously funny, and children who missed *Bixxy and the Secret Message* will want to read it also and learn more about Eddie's adventures, which are good fantasy and good Americana.

Two old fantasy favorites from England are back.

*Doctor Doolittle's Puddleby Adventures.* Written and illustrated by Hugh Lofting. Lippincott, 1952. \$3.00 (8-12).

Adults who have been reading Doctor Doolittle stories since 1920 are going to find it hard to believe that this book writes "Finis" for the series and for Hugh Lofting, the beloved author of them all. This is a good story too. Gub-Gub the hungry pig is there and Dub-Dub the duck and that ingenious animal the pushmi-pullyu as well as the Doctor himself as calm, kind, and omniscient as ever. The new adventures have to do with a shipwrecked dog, a horse that solves a mystery and, of all things, a travelling maggot. But the children should be warned that there aren't any more adventures. They'll just have to manage with the

*Mary Poppins In the Park.* By P. L. Travers. Illustrated by Mary Shepard. Harcourt, Brace, 1952. \$2.50. (8-12).

If the Banks children cry for Mary Poppins so do thousands of other children. The news that Mary rides her parrot-handled umbrella again is good news indeed. The incomparable Mary is just as vinegary as ever and never owns up to any of the extraordinary things that hap-

pen, but she does have a stylish new hat, trimmed with a crimson tulip. The park is the setting for each of the adventures and there are some good ones. The confusing story of the two policemen figurines and the loving lion was amusing and so was "Halloween," when everyone's shadow broke away for an evening on its own. Captious grownups may find these adventures a bit more contrived, foreseeable, and overly long but still, their spell is potent.

Turning now to realism, at home and abroad, the offering is also rich.

*Jill's Victory.* By Elisa Bialk. Illustrated by Edward Shenton. World Publishing Company, 1952. \$2.50 (10-14).

Citybred Jill Allen found herself strangely ignorant and incompetent in the new environment of her uncle's farm. Her 4H cousins seemed to do everything well, from cooking and making their own clothes to raising prize stock. Jill's one accomplishment—skilled horsemanship, was no use on the farm. Then, one day an old friend left a thoroughbred horse in Jill's care to be readied for the horse show. Jill was too cocky at the start, but after a few setbacks she went humbly and heartily to work. She wins her membership in the 4H and, on the second try, honors with her horse. Although this story follows a conventional pattern, Jill and the cousins are well-drawn and Jill's adjustments and growth in warm human relationships make this a pleasant story to read.

*Up a Crooked River.* By May McNeer. Illustrated by Lynd Ward. Viking Press, 1952. \$2.50. (10-14).

From the captain of the Palmetto Queen, a little river boat, to the four Renfro children, their auntie and a strange assortment of passengers, everyone agreed that it just could not be true. They had all gone to sleep safely anchored in the middle of a beautiful moonlit lake. When they woke up, the lake was gone and their boat was resting lop-sidedly in the middle of a small pool with mud and more mud

all round. It could only happen in Florida where lakes arise from dammed up limestone chimneys and disappear when the plug comes out. It was a predicament all right, but it brought a series of adventures for Pug Renfroe and her brother Randy, beyond their wildest dreams. They were the only ones aboard light enough to cross the mud. If their fellow passengers were odd, the characters they discovered on shore were downright sinister, except for the timid hermit. When the would-be jewel robbers lined up for the siege and the Italian concert singer turned out to be a homespun sharpshooter there was plenty of excitement ashore and aboard. This is a thoroughly amusing story.

*A Place For Peter.* By Elizabeth Yates. Illustrated by Nora Unwin. Coward-McCann, 1952. \$2.50. (10-14).

It is always a pleasure to come upon a book by this particular combination of author and artist. Both are sensitive, perceptive people with

rare beauty of style and spirit.

Peter has already appeared in two books, *Mountain Born* and *Once In a Year*. In this one, he is a sturdy thirteen-year-old but unhappily at odds with his father who still treats him as if he were a little boy. To make matters worse, Martha, the understanding mother, is called away and father and son are left to themselves for months. But the added responsibilities are precisely what Peter needs and wants. He manages the sugar bush alone, sees Shep through the birth of her pups, makes a difficult trail, deals with rattlesnakes and manages to enjoy life in spite of loneliness for his mother. When his father trusts him to take their prize cow to a distant farm for breeding, Peter knows his battle is won. He and his father are once more friends and companions. Benj, the farm hand, with his skills, his wisdom, and his closeness to earth and animals, helps this adjustment and remains a memorable character.

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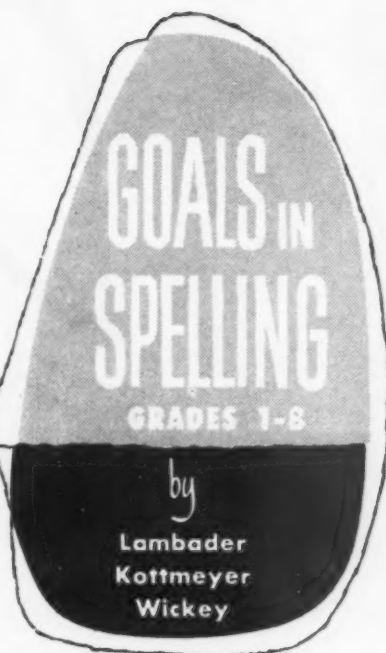
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